



New Americans Interagency Task Force Report Office of Governor Rod R. Blagojevich December 2006

A world map with a glowing orange and yellow border, set against a dark background. Below the map, silhouettes of a diverse group of people are shown against a warm, orange glow.

**Immigrant Integration: Improving Policy
for Education, Health and Human Services
for Illinois' Immigrants and Refugees**

" Immigrants bring to this country their hard work, strong family values and a desire to succeed and build a better future for their children. We are leading the nation when it comes to adopting policies to help immigrants integrate into our society. As State government, and working with our community partners, we can take this to the next step and help make sure immigrants continue playing a key role in moving Illinois forward. "

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR**



December 13, 2006

A year ago, I signed a landmark New Americans Executive Order to address the growing needs of immigrant and refugee residents in Illinois. My executive order calls for a coherent, strategic, and proactive state government approach to assist in integrating the rapidly growing immigrant population in Illinois.

As a result of the order, we established the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy. Their role is to coordinate the work of an external Policy Council and an internal, statewide Interagency Task Force comprised of nine state agencies with purview over healthcare, education, and human services for the state. The Council, which was staffed by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Joyce Foundation, developed broad policy recommendations on how the State can most strategically move immigrant integration forward. In turn, the Task Force has identified a series of recommendations and standards to improve the services the State provides to immigrant and refugee communities throughout Illinois.

Illinois is home to a diverse and growing immigrant population. These recommendations will help Illinois lead the nation in providing opportunities for these newcomers, and help us establish better ways for newcomers to integrate into the American way of life. Immigrants come to this country to work hard, provide for their children, and realize the American Dream. State government needs to do its part in helping immigrants become successful and realize their full potential as assets to their new communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rod Blagojevich". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

Immigrant Integration: Improving Policy for Education, Health and Human Services for Illinois' Immigrants and Refugees

New Americans Interagency Task Force Report, Year One
Office of New American Policy and Advocacy

December 2006



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Executive Summary

In November 2005, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced a first in the nation New Americans Executive Order to address the needs of immigrant and refugee residents in Illinois. This executive order calls for a coherent, strategic, and proactive state government approach to assist in integrating the rapidly growing immigrant population in Illinois. Among the primary objectives of the executive order were:

1. The establishment of the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy
2. The creation of a statewide Interagency Task Force

The executive order also set up a private New Americans Policy Council composed of 24 immigrant leaders and policy experts and staffed by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. The policy council's work has been supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Joyce Foundation. In coordination with the State, the policy council developed policy recommendations for the State on how to most strategically move immigrant integration forward. The policy council's recommendations are detailed in its separate report, "For the Benefit of All: Strategic Recommendations to Enhance the State's Role in the Integration of Immigrants in Illinois."

The Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy

The Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy:

- Guides an interagency task force through the process of developing a statewide, systematic approach to serving the immigrant population in Illinois
- Monitors federal immigration policy and advises the Governor on policy developments
- Acts as a liaison and advocate for Illinois families negatively affected by federal immigration policy

This office convened the first of two statewide Interagency Task Forces, comprised of representatives from nine state agencies with purview over healthcare, education, and human services. These agencies provide the majority of direct

services to Illinois residents, at a cost that represents over 50% of the total state budget. The interagency nature of this Task Force, and the significant fiscal impact represented, illustrates the states' commitment to comprehensively addressing the most urgent integration needs of immigrants and refugees.

This Task Force promulgated seven recommendations for the provision of services to immigrant and refugee communities. The state committed to implementing these recommendations and is developing plans to incorporate them into the way services are provided.

The Interagency Task Force members come from:

- The Department on Aging
- The Department of Children and Family Services
- The Department of Employment Security
- The Department of Human Services
- The Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- The Department of Public Health
- The Illinois State Board of Education
- The Illinois Board of Higher Education
- The Illinois Community College Board

Illinois Immigrants

Illinois welcomes a diverse immigrant population with differences that span language, culture, religion, economic status, and social mores. Like those in decades past, immigrants to Illinois come to work and to contribute, inserting themselves into both the high-skilled technical and entrepreneurial workforce and the low-skilled service and agricultural industries. They are young and old. They are documented and undocumented. They have differing levels of education, and possess varying quantities of human capital.

Immigrants and refugees have different degrees of earning power and arrive with different goals and objectives. Some boast excellent English language skills, others are able to communicate only in their native tongue. They are major participants in the social, political, and economic development of their communities—working, voting, paying taxes, and otherwise contributing to the vibrancy of their neighborhoods. All of these characteristics affect the social and economic condition of immigrants, and their integration into Illinois communities. This kind of diversity requires a comprehensive response to addressing the varying needs of immigrants.

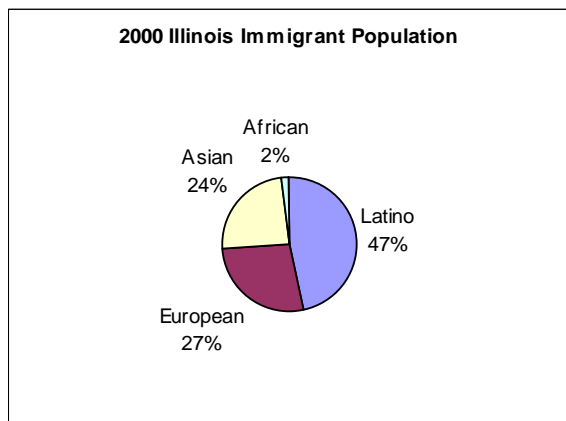


Figure 1. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2000.

In addition to the social benefits immigrant integration produces, there are economic benefits as well. Immigrants contribute to the state's economy by participating significantly across all employment sectors. In a number of occupation areas—computers and mathematics, architecture and engineering, health care—immigrants comprise roughly 20% of the workforce; among other occupations—building maintenance, food preparation, farming/fishing/forestry—immigrants are 37%, 27%, and 22%, respectively, of the workforce in each sector.¹ These figures illustrate that immigrants in the workforce are a key component of the economic growth engine in Illinois.

While immigrants make up a substantial percentage of the labor force, they also represent a significant force in Illinois' surge in homeownership. Since 2001, 80% of new homeowners in Cook County have been immigrants.² This growth has been trending throughout the state as areas outside of Chicago not traditionally associated with immigrant settlement are seeing increases in foreign-born homeownership.³ This increasing immigrant participation in the Illinois economy complements the social and cultural contributions they make to their new communities.

Illinois recognize the importance of ensuring meaningful integration for immigrant and refugee groups. With the continuing lack of leadership from the federal government on this important issue, we are positioned to lead the nation in formulating and implementing a strategic and cohesive immigrant integration policy. Some state agencies have been engaged in the business of immigrant integration for years, purposeful in the linguistically sensitive ways they provide services to those with limited English proficiency. For instance, the Department of Human Services has implemented a number of practices to address the needs of this population, and continues to lead the state in this endeavor.

Interagency Task Force Recommendations

The Interagency Task Force recommendations ensure that our state provides a comprehensive platform for immigrants and refugees to access services, contribute to their communities and enhance their lives and the lives of those around them. Rather than presenting a list of nebulous, unquantifiable objectives, this group strove to distinguish which efforts would be most strategic and most beneficial to the people of Illinois.

The following global recommendations offer a strategy for responding to the myriad needs of Illinois' immigrant and refugee community:

- Develop Welcoming Centers for immigrants and refugees
- Ensure adequate language services are available to all Illinois residents
- Define standards for state subcontractors and vendors to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Train staff to effectively meet the needs of the immigrants and refugees they serve
- Make vital documents language-accessible for immigrants and refugees
- Increase outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee communities
- Ensure that programmatic and policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees are data-driven

The implementation process has already begun, and the high-level recommendations for fiscal year 2008 include:

1. Establishing an immigrant and refugee Welcoming Center
2. Charging each state agency with developing its own "New Americans Plan" indicating how they will incorporate the universal recommendations
3. Creating a basic cultural competence curriculum, and a process for evaluating existing state agency plans through the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy

¹ Rob Paral and Associates. "Illinois Immigrants: Fueling Prosperity in a Changing Economy". October, 2006.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

In the more immediate future, each state agency is charged with developing a comprehensive limited English proficiency plan. By the end of fiscal year 2007, each state agency will have:

1. Instituted a bilingual pay policy
2. Implemented a bilingual competency testing process
3. Developed protocols for use of interpreters
4. Developed plans for communicating with limited English proficient individuals

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is one agency that has increased access to services for the limited English proficient population. DHS has developed a number of policies, procedures, and service provision practices that other state agencies can utilize as a foundation for the development of their own plans.

This report is the result of the first phase of a two-phase process, and presents these recommendations to Governor Blagojevich, and to the state, reflecting our commitment to integrating immigrant and refugees. This process has established a firm foundation for the second phase of this process, and will serve as a model for the next Interagency Task Force.

Introduction

Illinois has one of the largest immigrant populations in the country, with a foreign-born population comprising over 13% of the resident population.⁴ With over 1.6 million foreign-born individuals residing in Illinois, we rank 10th overall in number of foreign-born residents.⁵ These newcomers are settling into communities across the state; from the urban center of Chicago, to the rural region of St. Clair County, and countless suburban locales in between. What used to be the status quo—immigrants' moving into ethnic neighborhoods in Chicago—is no longer the case, as they navigate previously uncharted territory, following economic opportunity to non-traditional immigrant receiving communities. As immigrants transform these homogeneous towns across the state, the state and its communities must prepare to proactively integrate these newcomers.

Traditionally one of the primary points of entry for immigrants to the United States, Illinois residents hail from almost 200 different countries, and speak over 100 different languages.⁶ Illinois consistently ranks in the top ten receiving states for newcomers, and had one of the largest influxes of immigrants into this country during the 1990's: according to the 2000 Census, 45% of the states' immigrant population entered between 1990 and 2000.⁷

Historically, immigrants have found their way to the ethnic enclaves of Chicago, one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the country. In years past, immigrants have settled into the ethnic communities of Chicago, establishing such treasures as Chinatown, Pilsen, Ukrainian Village, and Uptown. All these communities are pillars in the structure of the city, and serve as gateways for the new wave of immigrants making their way to Illinois.

Chicago and its surrounding suburbs have the largest percentage of immigrant residents in Illinois: in 2005, 1.1 million foreign-born individuals lived in Cook County, comprising 64% of the foreign-born population in Illinois.⁸ Currently, however, communities outside of the Chicago metropolitan area are drawing immigrants in large numbers. More and more immigrants are finding their journey toward resettlement leads them away from traditional receiving communities, and into suburban and downstate communities. In the last decade, the immigrant population outside of the city

of Chicago increased by 89%, compared to a 34% increase in Chicago. Estimates show that nearly half of new immigrants in Illinois choose to reside in a suburb first, as opposed to a more traditional, urban, ethnic receiving community.⁹ This major demographic trend mirrors what is happening across the country: large numbers of immigrants are settling into non-traditional urban centers, and suburban and rural communities.

There are myriad reasons why new immigrants choose to settle in these non-traditional communities, chief amongst these reasons is employment opportunities.¹⁰ As Illinois has transitioned from a manufacturing center to a more service-oriented economy, more low-wage workers are drawn to this work in smaller suburban and rural communities, and are choosing to settle there. The growth experienced by these communities is also fueled by family reunification; the majority of immigrants in Illinois—roughly 60% of the total—came here in order to be reconnected with family members.¹¹

The US Census indicates that the foreign-born population in 30 of 102 Illinois counties increased dramatically between 1990 and 2000.¹² This growth was largely labor-driven. Cass County is a remarkable illustration of such a developing immigrant community. In 1990, the Hispanic population of Cass County was 56; a pork processing plant opened in 1987, drawing many new immigrant workers, and by 2000, the immigrant population in Cass County had increased twelve times, ballooning to 1,162, fully 8.5% of the county's population.¹³ With entrance into non-traditional communities, immigrants are transforming the employment and economic landscapes of Illinois towns.

Immigrants are a significant and increasing percentage of the U.S. labor force growth, and will fill workforce gaps created by an aging labor force. They have accounted for 46% of the net gain in the total labor force since 2000, and constituted more than 50% of the overall growth in the labor force in the last decade.^{14,15}

⁴ U.S. Census, 2005 American Community Survey.

⁵ US Census, 2004

⁶ Siegel, Wendy L. and Kappaz, Christina M., *Strengthening Illinois Immigrant Policy: Improving Health and Human Services for Immigrants and Refugees*, 2002.

⁷ US Census, 2000

⁸ U.S. Census, 2005 American Community Survey.

⁹ McKinney, Dave, "The New Immigrants" *Illinois Issues*, October 2001, pp. 17-21.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Siegel and Kappaz, 2002.

¹² US Census, 2000

¹³ US Census, 1990, 2000

¹⁴ Congressional Budget Office. 2005. *The Role of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office.

¹⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, 2005. *Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics in 2005*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Labor.

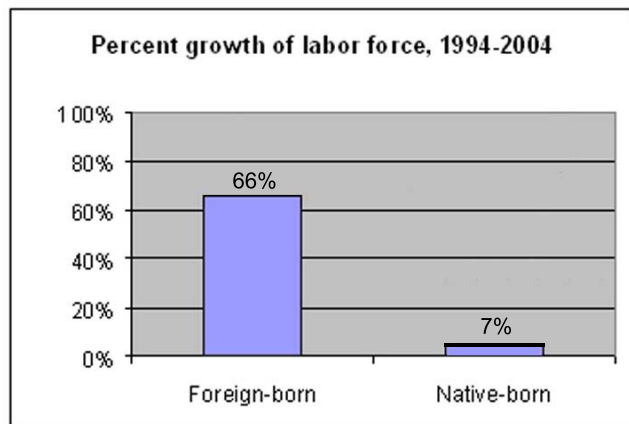


Figure 2. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) Toolkit, pg. 229

- The foreign-born labor force grew by 66% between 1994-2004, compared to a 7% increase in the native-born labor force.
- 80% of immigrants are working age, compared to 60% of the native-born.
- Between 2000 and 2050, new immigrants and their children will account for 83% of the growth in the working-age population, and 60% of total U.S. population growth.

While many argue that this huge influx of immigrants has put a strain on social service systems, in reality, immigrants utilize social services at rates well below native-born citizens. In the Chicago area where there is the largest immigrant concentration, receipt of welfare benefits by immigrants declined from 2.9% in 1990 to 1.5% in 2000. Comparatively, receipt of welfare among the native-born population was down from 4.6% to 2.1% during that same time period.¹⁶

This relatively low rate of benefit utilization among immigrants indicates that they are not taxing state resources, but also that they are not accessing benefits to the extent they are able.

Illinois immigrants, including the undocumented, pay an average of \$6.11 in taxes for every \$1.00 of major social services utilized; the native-born population pays \$3.85 for every \$1.00 of major social services used. Immigrants actually receive less in benefits than they pay in taxes, and they receive less than the native-born. This amounts to an annual payment of \$7.2 billion in taxes.¹⁷

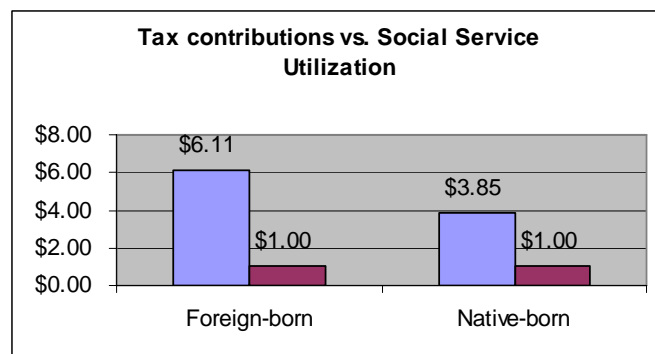


Figure 3. Illinois immigrants pay an average of \$6.11 in taxes for every \$1.00 of major social services utilized. (From Illinois Is Home, Statewide Survey of Immigrants and Refugees, 2004. Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights)

Immigrants are also active economic participants in their communities. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Asian-American businesses grew by 24 percent, and Latino businesses grew 31 percent, compared to 10 percent growth for all U.S. firms. These figures indicate that the growth in Asian-American and Latino businesses-not to mention buying power-is being stimulated by immigration.

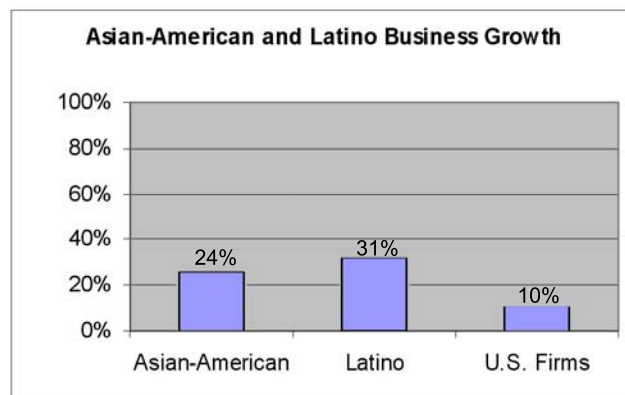


Figure 4. GCIR Toolkit, 2006.

In addition to driving economic growth, between 1990 and 2009, both Asian- American and Latino buying power will grow 347%, compared to a 158% increase in total U.S. buying power. Consumer expenditures of immigrants generate jobs in local economies, and add billions of dollars annually to GDP. By 2009, Asian-Americans and Latinos are projected to total 20% of the population and command almost 14% of U.S. buying power.

Immigration brings with it both benefits and challenges that must be addressed at the state level, and Governor Rod Blagojevich has made immigrant integration one of the focal points of his agenda. In November 2005, Governor

¹⁶ Illinois is Home, Statewide Survey of Immigrants and Refugees, 2004. Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

¹⁷ Ibid.

Blagojevich signed a first in the nation “Illinois New Americans Immigrant Policy” Executive Order for Illinois State Government (see Appendix B). The Executive Order directs us to formulate a coherent, strategic, and proactive approach to fostering the integration of the rapidly growing immigrant population in Illinois. The Executive Order was born out of the belief that immigrants are a positive presence in this state, and that in assisting them to acclimate to their new life here, all of Illinois benefits.

Immigrant integration is “a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving community work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.”¹⁸

Meaningful immigrant integration also recognizes the importance of a synergistic process, with each participant respecting the differences and diversity of the others. Side by side, immigrants and the native-born have contributed significantly to the prosperity of this nation. Communities across the state are finding that as their native-born populations are shrinking, the immigrant influx is a benefit to their local economies. Not only are immigrants revitalizing dying communities, they are also broadening our worldview by contributing to the social and cultural fabric of these communities.

The executive order established—among other things—an interagency task force of state agencies to examine, agency by agency, how state government can systematically address the changing demographics of Illinois. Because the immigrant population is growing and dispersing, state government agencies must adjust their outreach and communication strategies to address this population. The interagency task force has been charged with analyzing current agency policy and using that information to inform the process of developing statewide standards for targeted service delivery to immigrant communities throughout the state.

Convened by the Governor’s Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy and comprised of high-level agency decision-makers, the interagency task force was charged with identifying methods by which the state could modify the way it delivers services to immigrants and refugees. Specifically, the task force will address the areas of healthcare, education, and human services. This task force has worked to develop statewide recommendations and to implement changes based

on those recommendations. State agencies are gaining ownership of this undertaking, developing standards for addressing language access issues, as well as issues of cultural competence. Through individual agency assessments, they have identified achievements and challenges. This information has been used to develop statewide recommendations—universal standards for the provision of services to immigrant communities throughout the state.

In the absence of federal requirements, states are forced to play a larger role in attending to the needs of immigrant residents. Many non-traditional receiving communities are substantially affected by immigrant integration and are faced with the challenge of providing services to the large numbers of new residents they are receiving. These communities are linguistically isolated, with the immigrant population often the only residents who do not speak English. State agencies must work with these host communities to provide services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

The Governor’s record is evidence that in this state, we want to integrate, incorporate, engage, and welcome immigrants and refugees. State government actions ensure that immigrants are afforded some of the rights and services once denied. Since the outset of this administration:

- The state enacted legislation allowing immigrant students access to in-state tuition rates for college education.
- The Governor’s conviction that all students should have access to high-quality preschool, regardless of immigrant status was affirmed by the Illinois State Board of Education, which approved a rule amendment that will “prohibit Illinois public schools from denying any services to children because they lack documentation of immigration status or legal presence in the country”.¹⁹
- Programs like All Kids—the states’ new health insurance program that offers all Illinois’ uninsured children (regardless of immigration status) access to comprehensive health care—and I Save Rx—the state program to safely provide prescription drugs at the best possible price—serve to fill in gaps left by federal immigration policy.

¹⁸ Petsod, Daranee, Wang, Ted, McGarvey, Craig. Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. 2006.

¹⁹ Illinois State Board of Education, http://www.isbe.state.il.us/news/2005/feb18_05.htm



Governor Blagojevich's All Kids program is a landmark initiative making Illinois the first state to ensure all uninsured children have access to comprehensive, affordable health insurance. All Kids is open to Illinois residents up to age 19 regardless of income, citizenship status or preexisting conditions. Governor Blagojevich recognized that uninsured children suffer unnecessarily every day because they lack access to adequate health care. Uninsured children are less likely to have well child visits, more likely to be hospitalized for preventable conditions, and don't do as well in school as children with health insurance. This not only costs the uninsured family, it's a cost on society too. Over 40% of hospital costs for the uninsured are passed on as higher premiums to people with insurance. Ensuring that all children have health insurance allows them to establish a strong foundation for health early, and save everyone from assuming the costs of more expensive illnesses later. Working like a private insurance, All Kids provides comprehensive healthcare coverage, including doctors visits, vision and dental benefits, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, prescription drug coverage, medical equipment and mental health services.

Responding to a decrease in federal budget, the state restored funding for immigrant and refugee mental health services. And when thousands of refugee senior citizens were going to be dropped from the rolls of the Social Security Administration, the state established their eligibility for Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD).

Effectively integrating immigrants must involve movement away from debating immigration and toward acknowledging the responsibility of government for its residents. One of the most important areas to address is meaningful language access to services. Individuals with limited English proficiency face a myriad of barriers in integrating into their new communities, and it has been reported that limited English proficient status is highly correlated with multiple levels of hardship.²⁰

The interagency task force, in developing its recommendations, recognized the importance of language access, and developed recommendations to address this issue.

Interagency Task Force Universal Recommendations

Positive and proactive initiatives are crucial to the well-being of immigrants and native residents alike. Phase I of this multi-phase process addresses the areas of healthcare, education, and human services. The agencies involved in this phase include:

- The Department on Aging
- The Department of Children and Family Services
- The Department of Employment Security
- The Department of Human Services
- The Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- The Department of Public Health
- The Illinois State Board of Education
- The Illinois Board of Higher Education
- The Illinois Community College Board

²⁰ Fix, Michael, Papademetriou, Demetrios, and Cooper, Betsy, "Leaving Too Much to Chance: A Roundtable on Immigrant Integration Policy, Migration Policy Institute, 2005.

The Interagency Task Force has identified recommendations to implement across state agencies that are intended to have the largest statewide impact. While these recommendations cannot be universally applied to every state agency, the Governor expects all agencies to review and adjust their services to meet the needs of immigrant communities.

These recommendations represent the state's commitment to standardizing access to services for limited English proficient persons and to impacting services on a state level.

This list of recommendations serves as a starting point for our standard, statewide response to addressing the needs of immigrants and refugees, specifically in the areas of healthcare, education, and human services. They are constructed with the intent of improving the level of access to services for immigrants and refugees. The state fully intends to incorporate these recommendations into the functioning of state agencies, and over the next few months the interagency task force will engage in a strategic planning process. This process will involve determining the impact of the

implementation of these recommendations and will produce a timeline and workplan for implementation. Once the workplan is completed, state agencies will be expected to incorporate the appropriate recommendations into their agency structure. The Governor's Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy will monitor the state's compliance and ensure that state agencies are responding appropriately.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| • Recommendation 1 | Develop Welcoming Centers for immigrants and refugees |
| • Recommendation 2 | Ensure adequate language services are available to all Illinois residents |
| • Recommendation 3 | Define standards for state subcontractors and vendors to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services |
| • Recommendation 4 | Develop a comprehensive linguistic and cultural competency training for all state staff |
| • Recommendation 5 | Make vital documents language accessible for immigrants and refugees |
| • Recommendation 6 | Increase outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee communities |
| • Recommendation 7 | Ensure that programmatic and policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees are data-driven |

Recommendation 1: Develop Welcoming Centers for immigrants and refugees

Illinois should develop an Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Center. No other state has introduced such a comprehensive approach, but Illinois recognizes the great cultural, social and economic value immigrants bring to the state and seeks to capitalize on this potential by expediting the integration of immigrants and refugees.

Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Centers have the potential to ease the acclimation process and to provide a comprehensive structure for accessing essential services such as healthcare, employment, housing, public transportation, childcare, English language training, education, and nutrition information.

- **Provide central resource for immigrants and refugees to obtain information on state services**

Welcoming Centers serve as a centralized resource and service locations that will maximize the benefit immigrants and refugees bring to the state by helping them:

- Gain citizenship
- Learn how to speak English
- Participate fully in their communities
- Apply for critical social services
- Locate housing
- Start and expand businesses
- Gain job skills
- Secure affordable health care
- Find meaningful employment
- Share in their children's education
- Advance their education
- Understand different cultures

- **Multi-agency collaboration**

Since Welcoming Centers provide access to state services, as well as resource information and referrals, their success rests upon the strength of the partnerships between Illinois' state agencies. This must be seen as a multi-agency collaborative that includes active participation from the following Illinois agencies:

- **Department on Aging**
- **Department of Children and Family Services**
- **Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**
- **Department of Employment Security**
- **Department of Healthcare and Family Services**
- **Department of Human Rights**
- **Department of Human Services**
- **Department of Financial and Professional Regulation**
- **Department of Public Health**
- **Illinois Community College Board**
- **Illinois State Board of Education**

These agencies will designate liaisons to a Welcoming Center State Steering Committee to be led by the Director of the Welcoming Centers and the Department of Human Services.

Recommendation 2: Ensure adequate language services are available to all Illinois residents

It is imperative that non-English speaking immigrants and refugees have access to services. Efficient deployment of competent bilingual staff is one way to help maximize services to key language groups, and the effective use of interpreters is another. It is important to note that the ability to speak another language is not the equivalent of proficiency in that language.

- **Hire and maintain an adequate number of bilingual staff.**

Bilingual staff are an integral part of the service delivery system. The state should create a system to prioritize the hiring and deployment of staff deemed proficient in the languages required to fill in the gaps currently experienced by some state agencies. This system should encourage and support bilingual staff in the hiring process. We must support recruitment and training of bilingual candidates who are able to provide consistent and competent language service over time. Ongoing training should be provided to develop the language skills and cultural competence of bilingual staff.

- **Implement a standard, statewide bilingual test to ensure quality language services.**

A universal proficiency requirement should be established for interpreters and bilingual staff. Proficiency should be assessed utilizing a comprehensive statewide test. Passing scores on written and oral proficiency tests in multiple languages (that accurately measure the skill level of potential interpreters and bilingual staff) should be a prerequisite for all candidates for interpreter and bilingual staff positions. A comprehensive assessment of the language abilities of staff, prior to receiving bilingual pay, is a necessary part of ascertaining the capacity in which they can utilize their language skills to serve limited English proficient persons. A standardized, statewide bilingual test will serve as a tool to measure the proficiency of bilingual staff.

Work at some agencies requires language proficiency in technical terminology. For example, an intake worker requires different language skills than a psychiatric nurse. As such, individual agencies can develop—in tandem with the State—an additional content-specific tool to address their technical language needs, and to test the proficiency of their staff. Once bilingual staff are recognized as such, each agency is able to determine where they will be most efficiently employed. Establishing a statewide standard of proficiency levels allows for the appropriate assignment of bilingual staff.

- **Adopt required performance standards for all interpreters**

The state should require a proficiency standard for interpreters it employs directly or by contract. A bilingual test—similar to the test recommended for state employees—can assess the proficiency of contracted interpreters. As we are proactive about assessing the skills of contracted interpreters, we can identify a pool of qualified interpreters, easily accessible when needed.

- **Develop protocols that will guide the use of interpreter services at state agencies.**

Properly trained interpreters with the appropriate language proficiency level in particular content areas should always be employed. Many state agencies deal with complex and/or personal issues; it is therefore inappropriate to use minor children as interpreters under any circumstances. Established protocols will eliminate inappropriate use of a minor child or an untrained interpreter.

- **Develop protocols to access language lines.**

A statewide contract to obtain telephonic interpretation services is an essential part of ensuring access to services, and should be employed by the state. When neither bilingual staff nor contracted interpreters are available to provide services to limited English proficient persons, other access to competent interpreters—including telephonic resources—is vital to service provision.

Recommendation 3: Define standards for state subcontractors and vendors to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

State agencies contract with community organizations to provide services to immigrant residents. Often these contractors are neighborhood mainstays and have long been addressing the specialized language and cultural needs of their communities. Specifically, ethnic social service agencies throughout the state help to remove the language barrier by providing services to various ethnic groups in their native languages. There are, however, no established guidelines for these or other agencies to deliver services that are culturally and linguistically competent. To address this issue, the state shall engage in the following:

- **Grantees and contractors should provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services through a standardized contracts process.**

All contracting agencies should be required to comply with an established standard for the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. This standard should be a condition of new state agency contracts and state agency contract renewals. Organizations unwilling to adhere to these standards may forgo the opportunity to provide contracted services for the state.

- **Provide contract incentives for serving LEP persons.**

Community organizations that can meet established standards to provide for language access for limited English proficient persons should be granted access to state interpreter and cultural competence training and technical assistance.

- **Require that each contractor establish a plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.**

All state contractors should have a uniform requirement to develop and implement a plan outlining a process to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to individuals with limited English proficiency. Employing the use of such plans will help to ensure that language access barriers are addressed.

- **Require that contractors collect standardized primary language data.**

A statewide standard should be created to establish uniform guidelines for contracting agencies to collect primary language data. Primary language data collected by contractors can influence the type of service provided, the quality of service provided, and the manner in which services are provided to limited English proficient persons. State contractors should also be required to collect this data, and to make this data available to state agencies.

Recommendation 4: Develop a comprehensive linguistic and cultural competency training for all state staff

Each state agency has the responsibility of providing services that are linguistically and culturally informed. Because of the myriad ways in which services are provided—some through local offices, some through contracted community agencies—it is of the utmost importance that there be some universal standard by which state agency representatives interact with state agency service recipients. This standard should extend beyond typical customer service to a service delivery system that is culturally and linguistically sensitive.

The state ought to ensure that state personnel are trained on cultural and linguistic service provision and are equipped to understand the needs of the people they are serving. It is our goal to offer quality, comprehensive training to state staff to ensure the delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

- **Ensure agency staff understand the changing nature of the immigrant and refugee communities, and utilize the data appropriately.**

It is important to involve staff in the implementation plan to serve limited English proficient individuals. Providing staff with demographic information and presenting a rationale, we will impress on state agency staff the importance of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The goal is that data will positively affect the way in which agency staff approach their interactions with limited English proficient individuals.

- **Develop cultural competence training curriculum, and mandate training for all state employees.**

Cultural competence involves the capacity of state agency employees to incorporate cultural considerations into the various aspects of their day-to-day work. In order for employees to provide services that are sensitive and responsive to cultural differences, adequate training should be provided to equip them with the skills to interact with customers and with co-workers that have different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

- **Ensure cultural competence training is adopted as part of continuing professional development.**

The Governor's Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy is in a prime position to provide instruction and technical assistance to state agencies in the area of inter-group relations. The Director and the Senior Policy Associate, in collaboration with cultural competency trainers, can deliver a comprehensive cultural competency curriculum to state agencies, which can then be adapted to each state agency's needs. The coordination of such a training team to produce an across-the-board training curriculum would serve as a foundation for ongoing language and cultural competence training initiatives.

We must also enlist the training team to find a way to incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate services training into state agency training infrastructures and into each state agency training schedule. There should be an established number of hours of training for state employees, particularly those engaged in providing services at key points of entry.

Recommendation 5: Make vital documents language accessible for immigrants and refugees

Documents central to the programs and services provided by state agencies should be available to all individuals who request services and should be accessible to limited English proficient individuals. Ensuring that these materials are fully language accessible is cost-effective and essential to facilitating accurate communication. Currently, there is no statewide standard for which types of documents are deemed vital. We should establish criteria for state agencies to determine which documents to translate, and into which languages.

- **State agencies shall be required to identify vital documents specific to the mission of their programs and ensure immigrants and refugees are able to read and understand vital documents**

Agencies shall conduct a systematic review of all state agency forms, notices, and outreach materials to determine which written materials are considered vital documents. These documents should then be flagged for translation into appropriate languages, based on the language characteristics of each agency service population.

All vital documents shall be translated into Spanish within a limited time frame; the state will establish thresholds for translating documents into languages other than Spanish. The next step for agencies would be to identify these documents for translation into other languages, to ensure full access to customers who make up a critical mass of the agency's service population.

- **Apply standards that assure accuracy of existing and future translations**

To ensure the accuracy of translation of these documents, uniform standards for translation should be set, including the utilization of a qualified translator. There should be a five-step process to ensure accurate translations: 1) primary translation by a qualified translator; 2) back translation by a second qualified translator; 3) editing jointly by primary and secondary translators; 4) careful final typing and proof-reading; 5) field testing.²¹

- **Include a multilingual “language block” with all vital documents to inform the recipient of the importance of the document**

Until there is the capacity to ensure that all vital documents are translated into all the languages necessary to reach limited English proficient customers, the use of a standard 30 language “language block” can serve to assist state agencies in conveying the importance of a document given or sent to a customer. By attaching such a language block to vital documents, state agencies are notifying customers—in their own language—that it is imperative they have access to the information contained in the document.

- **Display links to translated documents on each agency homepage and a link to a web-based document library**

Every state agency's website should include links to documents in foreign languages on their home page. These links should be prominent and easily visible to anyone visiting the homepage and should very clearly indicate that they will lead to information in a specific language. Each agency will also provide electronic versions of vital documents to the Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy. This office will maintain a web-based accessible document library as a resource for immigrants and refugees and for those that assist them in obtaining services.

- **Conduct plain language review of all documents, ensuring they are readable and understandable**

Public documents should be developed and developed at an appropriate reading level. The general standard is to provide documents at a fourth grade reading level. State agencies often serve residents with lower than average English reading levels, and currently much of the documentation disseminated through state programs is written at a level that is well above their literacy levels. Putting state agency documents into plain language will ensure that more customers understand the information contained in the document, making it easier for them to respond to the document in appropriate ways.

²¹ Lesser, Dan, Paral, Rob, Siegal, Wendy, and Vera, Mireya Achieving Language and Cultural Competence in Illinois Department of Human Services Programs, 2005.

Recommendation 6: Increase outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee communities

The state should improve its outreach efforts to reach all racial and ethnic groups. With proactive work with community and faith-based organizations and other means, we can heighten the awareness of the general public, as well as that of language and ethnic minorities, by implementing concentrated outreach efforts.

- **Market/advertise programs and services in ethnic media outlets**

The large immigrant population in Illinois has generated an influx of various media services that target ethnic communities in non-English languages and/or with culturally specific messages. Almost every ethnic group in the State has at least one corresponding media channel, and many immigrant groups rely heavily on these outlets for news and information. State agencies are not regularly utilizing any of these media outlets for the purpose of advertising programs and services. We must integrate outreach into the media framework of limited English proficient communities, as this helps to raise awareness of the programs that are available.

State agencies should include, as a part of their budgets, costs associated with advertising in minority media outlets. Minority media need support to cover public services announcements and information promoting governmental programs.

- **Agencies must diversify their advisory boards to reflect the ethnic diversity of the groups they serve**

State agencies engage advisory boards, advisory councils, task forces and workgroups that often lack representation from limited English speaking advocates. These groups are mobilized around particular policies, services, and issues that affect state agencies. As these groups wrestle with issues related to the various program areas of the agency, it is important to have ethnic group and limited language group representation. It should be written into bylaws and/or rules as appropriate, that this body be reflective of the ethnically diverse community.

- **Develop Public Service Announcements**

Agencies should develop a plan that ensures maximum outreach by utilizing public service announcements (PSA's). In the process of developing and disseminating these PSA's, agencies must work to develop and maintain networks and relationships that can help promote agency programs.

- **Develop outreach plans and utilize data and translated materials**

The state should develop an outreach approach that is guided by data. Data on demographics can assist in locating the underserved immigrant populations, which the State can then target with an outreach campaign specifically developed for immigrant groups to address the underutilization of services. Each state agency can then develop concentrated outreach plans to inform the public of the services available and instruct potential consumers on ways to access them.

Recommendation 7: Ensure that programmatic and policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees are data-driven

Data is an important driver in service provision, as it can dictate when, where, and how appropriate services should be provided. Understanding the dynamic demographics of a changing immigrant and refugee community is central to good government. The state recognizes the changing face of Illinois communities and is committed to shaping state services to respond to the specific needs of immigrant and refugee groups. As we effectively utilize data to craft services to immigrants and refugees, we can assist making service provision more effective and more efficient.

- **Develop uniform standards for data collection within all state agencies**

Implementing a standard form of data collection will ensure that all State agencies are collecting the same data in the same ways, allowing for accurate assessments across the agencies. To conduct meaningful assessments of service provision, the state should ensure that all the points of measurement are compatible. This change also provides for accurate information on demographics, primary language, and the utilization of services.

- **Obtain standardized language data on all state agency customers**

Each agency should collect language data on their service population. This baseline data will provide a way in which to

modify the type and amount of services delivered to a particular group, in a particular area, based on need.

- **Analyze census and other data to assess whether agency programs adequately serve limited English proficient persons**

Census data and other types of demographic data—in tandem with the data agencies currently collect—can and should be used to assess the level of services provided in various communities. The data obtained through the census can assist State agencies in deciding where to direct their resources, and what resources might be most needed in specific areas.

State Agency Reports

Each state agency has been called upon to implement their own standards specific to the services they provide and the populations they serve. The Interagency Task Force has completed a self-assessment, identifying the ways in which services to immigrants, refugees, and the limited English proficient (LEP) population could be enhanced. Following are brief descriptions of state agencies involved in this first phase of service assessment. These individual agency reports showcase some of their best practices and proposed future initiatives.

Learning by Leading: The Department of Human Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services has for the last three years been engaged in an LEP implementation and strategic initiative to ensure their services to immigrants and refugees are language accessible. From this intensive process, DHS has learned the importance of data collection, LEP resources, and agency commitment in driving the deliverance of effective services to individuals with limited English proficiency.

The impetus behind this process was a gathering of service providers, policy experts, and members of the philanthropic community—convened by Grace Hou, Assistant Secretary for Programs at DHS—to discuss the provision of meaningful access to services for cultural and linguistic minorities in Illinois. An internal LEP group was identified to drive the process from within the agency. As a part of this gathering, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, the Michael Reese Health Trust, and the Community Memorial Foundation agreed to provide funding to the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law to organize a team of researchers to assess how DHS provided services to the limited English proficient, and to develop a strategic plan for the Department to enhance its cultural and linguistic competence. This plan included a list of comprehensive recommendations issued in January 2006, and DHS immediately began the process of studying and implementing them. The Governor's New Americans Executive Order has identified the DHS initiative as a model

for other state agencies to follow as they examine their service provision to immigrants and refugees.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) assists Illinois residents to achieve self-sufficiency, independence and health to the maximum extent possible by providing integrated family-oriented services, promoting prevention and establishing measurable outcomes in partnership with communities. Due to the many and diverse points of contact individuals and families may make with the Department, it is critical to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to access services with ease.

DHS is Illinois' largest agency, with more than 14,000 employees and an annual budget of over \$5 billion and operates through six program divisions:

- **Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA)** – Administers community-based substance abuse treatment programs.
- **Division of Community Health and Prevention (DCHP)** – Administers programs in the areas of community health services, family and youth development, violence prevention and intervention, addiction prevention, and infants and toddlers with developmental delays.
- **Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)** – Operates state developmental centers and administers other residential, in-home and day programs for people with developmental disabilities. This program serves a small percentage of immigrants and refugees. As individuals with language needs are identified, the Division of Developmental Disabilities utilizes internal and external resources to provide language services to those in need.
- **Division of Human Capital Development (DHCD)** – Administers Illinois public assistance programs (cash, food and medical) through 119 Family Community Resource Centers statewide. Also administers childcare, employment and training, homeless services, and refugee and immigrant services programs. This is the largest division within the Department, serving over 260,000 clients through Family Community Resource Centers.
- **Division of Mental Health (DMH)** – Operates state mental hospitals and administers community-based mental health treatment programs.
- **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** – Administers vocational rehabilitation, home services and

other programs for persons with physical disabilities.

DHS delivers services directly through nearly 211 local offices statewide, and in partnership with a network of local providers that reach every part of Illinois to provide direct care services in every county of the state.

A Leader in the Process

In response to the increasing foreign-born population in Illinois, DHS embarked on its Initiative to Serve Limited English Proficiency Clients, also known as its LEP Initiative. Through this initiative, DHS sought to re-engineer its service infrastructure in order to better meet the needs of this growing demographic, and so began an intensive process of analyzing how DHS served the immigrant and refugee populations. This process provided an assessment of the agency's services to immigrant and refugee populations in terms of how they were provided, how well they were provided, and if they were fully accessible. As a result of this internal assessment, DHS began to develop and implement new ways of addressing the needs of these populations.

As part of the LEP initiative, DHS developed a network of division liaisons called "LEP liaisons" which engage in planning and implementation around language and cultural competence issues. This group meets regularly to discuss ways to provide better access to services to LEP persons. These include:

- **Developing local office plans to ensure consistent, comprehensive services to LEP persons.** Divisions are currently working on completing Local Office or facility plans, which will serve as a resource guide in each office where individuals are served. These plans contain the proper protocol—universal throughout the Department, while adaptable to the specific needs of each office—for providing services for LEP persons.
- **Exploring bilingual translation and interpretation services to LEP clients at all Department facilities.** This group is currently searching out ways to universalize access to services for LEP persons. This includes improving access to all Department documents.
- **Providing data to track services provided to non-English speaking individuals.** Each liaison provides a quarterly data report indicating the numbers of non-English speaking persons they provided services to. This helps to track the populations accessing services, to identify which services are being accessed, and to tailor the provision of services to ensure they are language appropriate. This data also serves to identify service

gaps, and helps track the agency's progress.

Data collection is identified as one of the early successes of the LEP Initiative. Other early successes included:

- **LEP experts on Advisory Councils**—To institutionalize ongoing attention to the issues, LEP experts have been appointed to each of DHS' primary advisory councils.
- **Providers Attention**—All DHS Request for Proposals now ask applicants to address their ability to serve clients (where applicable) that are limited English proficient.
- **Outreach**—DHS conducted outreach efforts via Food Stamp and DHS Days in four immigrant communities in 2004-2005.
- **Strategic Plan**—DHS has endeavored to establish partnerships with foundations, advocates, and providers to ensure their efforts are directed in the right direction.

Key Steps taken to create the DHS LEP Initiative:

1. *Establish a goal*
DHS' goal was to better meet the diverse human service needs of the growing population of LEP persons in the state of Illinois.
2. *Identify key external stakeholders*
A vibrant group of advocates already existed in this area and were willing to work with DHS to establish proper goals and help to bring them to fruition.
3. *Identify internal liaisons to different program areas*
It was logical for each division director to assign a liaison to spearhead the LEP Initiative tasks in their division – these liaisons meet regularly to report on progress and provide input.
4. *Establish objectives and create specific workplans*
Each objective was given action steps, a point person responsible, and a timeline.

As the Department worked on implementing its LEP Initiative, they engaged in a comprehensive assessment by the Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. Beginning in 2005, a team of four consultants provided technical assistance to DHS on this project. The consultant team interviewed the executive teams in each of DHS' six program divisions and its Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs with the goal of creating recommendations for the Department to incorporate into its LEP Initiative. The team finished its report in December 2005, and DHS is now incorporating their expert analysis into its Department-wide planning.

The Department was presented with overarching strategic and division-specific recommendations to meet the needs of LEP persons. DHS has aggressively begun to respond to those recommendations and to implement them into its short- and long-term strategic planning.

Many of the recommendations in the report were already being implemented as a result of their internal process. This included a revised Administrative Directive for Serving LEP Persons, standardized language preference data collection and analysis, establishing linguistic access at key points of service, a bilingual pay policy, and addressing the delivery of linguistically and culturally competent services by its many contractors.

Again driven by recommendations from the comprehensive assessment and having already begun the process of improving access to services for immigrants, refugees, and other limited English persons, DHS continues to take steps

Bilingual Pay Policy

DHS provides bilingual pay to employees as a means to ensure that their services are accessible to all, including persons with limited English proficiency. Bilingual pay is given to employees based on their demonstrated ability to effectively communicate in American Sign Language, Braille, and/or a language other than English. The proficiency of each employee is measured before they are approved to receive bilingual pay by administering a Language Proficiency Test. This test is designed to assess a person's ability to effectively communicate in a language other than English while performing duties for DHS. The Department desires to attract and retain employees with language skills that are necessary to best deliver services in accordance with our mission to residents of Illinois; offering a bilingual pay option assists in that endeavor.

toward increasing access to services for these populations. Committed to making the changes necessary to ensure that LEP persons can engage in programs and services without language barriers. DHS seeks to respond to the following recommendations:

- **Create a Language and Cultural Competency Office**

The Office of Language and Cultural Competence (LCC) would serve to coordinate key language and cultural competence functions department-wide. The Director of this office should have sufficient authority and experience to effectively implement the larger Language and Cultural Competency Plan. Other tasks of the Office would include:

- Coordinating data collection, analysis and planning;
- Establishing Department-wide LCC performance standards and goals and monitoring Department and division level performance;
- Coordinating the language and proficiency testing of bilingual staff and interpreters;
- Overseeing the agency' oral interpretation services and document translations;
- Overseeing Department-wide LCC training;
- Overseeing the monitoring of contractor LCC services.

- **Accurately translate vital documents**

DHS is working to translate all its vital documents, including posters and brochures, into Spanish, and to establish thresholds for other languages based on service utilization rates. The tasks would include:

- Reviewing all DHS forms, notices and outreach materials to determine which are "vital" documents;
- Translating all vital documents into Spanish within 3 months; establish thresholds for other languages;
- Applying standards that assure accuracy of existing and future translations.
- Including a multilingual "language block" with all vital documents informing recipient of document's importance;

- Displaying links to translated documents on the DHS division homepage; and
- Conducting a plain language review of all agency documents.

- **Ensure that agency contractors deliver linguistically culturally competent services**

DHS is currently in the process of exploring options for incorporating a mandate into the contracts we have with the organizations we have formal partnerships with. The provision of culturally competent services will become a requisite component of the services provided by these partner agencies. This initiative will require the following:

- DHS to publish Language and Cultural Competency guidelines for all contracted agency service providers;
- DHS to require that each contractor have a Language and Cultural Competency plan with a small but powerful set of key performance indicators, and actively monitor contractors' Language and Cultural Competency performance.
- DHS to require that contractors collect standardized primary language data.
- DHS to expand contract incentives/bonuses for serving limited English proficient persons.
- DHS to offer contractors access to DHS interpretation and cultural competence training and technical assistance.

Adherence to the implementation of these recommendations will contribute towards establishing comprehensive service provision to immigrants, refugees, and other limited English proficient persons. DHS is committed to effectively addressing the barriers to service for this population.

Department on Aging

The Department on Aging is the state agency entrusted with responsibility for planning and direction of state activities that relate to older people and their families. To meet this charge, the Department serves as a consistent and informed advocate for older people and the causes that benefit them. The Department also offers direct service to seniors and their families through telephone assistance, the Senior HelpLine, the Circuit Breaker and Illinois Cares Rx Programs, and various community outreach services to offer information, education, and advocacy.

The Department on Aging is responsible for providing a comprehensive service delivery system to serve the state's two million senior citizens age 60 and older, in coordination with thirteen Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's). Older people who enter the state parallel the diversity of newcomers of other age cohorts; the number of these seniors that are immigrants, refugees, or limited English proficient, however, is unknown.

Most direct services to seniors and their families come from local providers who know best the seniors and resources in each community. As ethnic minorities become a progressively larger proportion of the state's elderly population, it is increasingly important to structure services in such a way as to be most responsive to their needs. To fit this responsive paradigm, the state is divided into thirteen planning and service areas led by an area agency on aging.

Because advanced age and "outsider" status often work to exacerbate the need for service, the Department on Aging has implemented a number of best practices to better address the needs of the ethnic elderly population. They will also embark on a set of new initiatives within the next year to enhance services to immigrants and language minorities.

Best Practices

- **Community Partnerships.** The Department has chosen to channel support through community agencies developed specifically to serve elders with limited proficiency in English by supporting—and sometimes aiding in the development of—ethnic provider agencies.
- **Outreach and Recruitment Campaign.** The Suburban Area Agency on Aging conducted an outreach campaign to recruit ethnic-based service providers. The Suburban Area Agency on Aging also conducted special planning
- **Licensing.** DCFS is also responsible for setting

meetings and then issued a request for Letters of Intent to agencies interested in receiving funding to provide targeted services to ethnic and minority older adults and family caregivers.

- **Language Assistance Plan.** The Suburban Area Agency on Aging developed and is in the process of implementing a Language Assistance Plan (LAP). They conducted training for internal staff and external funded agencies, secured funding to cover costs for an initial period using a telephone interpretation service, and began researching next steps. The Suburban Area Agency on Aging plans to implement LAP measures into monitoring tools, and press releases, and develop a multi-language translated brochure for limited English proficient persons based on the suggestions of service providers.
- **The Senior HelpLine.** The Senior HelpLine staff assesses needs, sends literature, provides information on programs and services, and links the elderly and their caregivers to a range of services provided locally: case management, legal services, transportation, employment, and nutrition services. Currently, the Senior HelpLine employs one full-time Spanish speaking Aging Program Specialist and contractual help from three additional specialists who speak Spanish, and one who speaks Russian.

New Initiatives

- **The Wise Elders Program.** The Wise Elders Program is a pilot project designed to train immigrants to represent the Department on Aging in their own communities. Wise Elders workers and staff from the Illinois Department on Aging will work together to maintain a presence in ethnic communities, taking part in social, as well as service events in communities all over the state. Part of the plan is to encourage minority elders to interact with the mainstream, and to form alliances with other ethnic groups.
- **Cooperative Services.** The goal is to expand the model set by the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE), a coalition of agencies addressing language and cultural barriers to services for seniors. Currently the model allows for cooperative service between mainstream case managers and other administrators and ethnic communities to capitalize on the informal support system that exists within each culture and to protect against the possibility that vital information is lost in translation.

- **Ongoing Outreach and Recruitment.** The Department has the goal of developing and supporting an effort to reach and mentor potential service providers who are members of minority or immigrant groups.

Department of Children and Family Services

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was created specifically to serve children and families by providing child welfare services across the state, protecting the children of Illinois from abuse and neglect. The mission of the Department is to protect children who are reported to be abused or neglected and to increase their families' capacity to safely care for them; provide for the well-being of children in their care; provide appropriate, permanent families as quickly as possible for those who cannot safely return home; and support early intervention and child abuse prevention activities.

Best known for its child protection services, the purview of the agency also includes providing substitute care for children affected by abuse or neglect; assisting adoptable children to find new homes; and licensing day care centers and group homes.

Child Protection. Child protection services are the most recognized program offered by DCFS. The goal of the child protection program is "...to protect the best interest of the child, offer protective services in order to prevent any further harm to the child and to other children in the family, and to stabilize the home environment and preserve family life whenever possible."

Substitute Care. Substitute care placements are selected to provide a safe and homelike setting for children needing to be temporarily placed outside their own home. This type of placement is not intended to be permanent, but occurs as a way to protect children from harmful situations, with the ultimate goal of reuniting them with their family.

Adoption. When circumstances indicate that it is not safe for a child to return home, DCFS works to move children into permanent homes through adoption and legal guardianship. These arrangements offer a chance at a new beginning for many children.

standards and licensing day care centers, homes, group homes, and day care agencies. In addition to licensing day care providers, the Department purchases day care services for individual children.

This past fiscal year, DCFS served roughly 19,000 children. Of those, 62% were African American, 30% White, 6% Hispanic, and 2% all other races. The Department reports that the majority of the children and families they serve are English speaking, but there are families with language assistance needs. The overwhelming majority of the children and families that require language access assistance are Spanish speaking. As such, DCFS has begun to translate many of their materials into Spanish. DCFS recognizes the need to ensure that all their services are accessible by all residents of Illinois.

To begin to address this issue with their largest language minority, the Department has engaged in a number of different practices to ensure accessibility.

· The Latino Consortium

The Latino Consortium is a group of community-based social service agencies that undertake a significant amount of work in the Latino communities in and around Chicago. When a Latino family comes to the attention of DCFS, the Latino Consortium is alerted, and employs an internal organization to assist in placing Latino children in Spanish-speaking homes. Agencies also market foster parent opportunities in ethnic media outlets, increasing the likelihood that Spanish-speaking families will respond.

· Working with Latino Families Online Training

The Department has partnered with Loyola University and Western Illinois University to create a comprehensive online training designed to ensure Latino children and their families receive services in a culturally appropriate manner. With the understanding that child welfare specialists need to be reasonably culturally competent while working with the largest immigrant group in Illinois, the Department has made this training a requirement of employment. To reduce the misunderstandings that occur due to cultural differences—and lead to family disruption—this training will assist Department workers to assume a more culturally inclusive posture when determining whether or not children in Latino families are in dangerous and/or abusive situations.

New Initiatives

- **Mexican Consulate Mobile Unit Partnership.** The Mexican Consulate Mobile Unit travels around the state, staying in a location for several days to meet with Mexican nationals. DCFS is engaging with the Mexican Counsel for Protection to discuss the possibility of DCFS staff from Operations, Licensing and Child Protection traveling with the Mobile Unit to provide child welfare information.
- **Cross-Training Program.** DCFS is exploring the idea of Mexican national social workers coming to Illinois to “intern” with the agency and to learn how DCFS handles child welfare issues. While here, the Mexican national social workers would train DCFS staff on cultural issues.

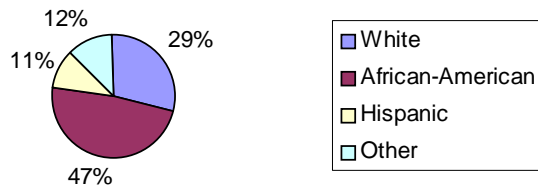
Department of Healthcare and Family Services

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) is committed to empowering Illinois’ residents to lead healthier and more independent lives. HFS accomplishes this mission by providing adequate access to healthcare services at a reasonable cost; assisting families through the child support process by establishing and enforcing support obligations; helping people become more self-sufficient in their home energy needs through energy conservation and bill payment assistance; and through effective cost management of healthcare purchasing.

HFS is organized into three major program areas: the Division of Child Support Enforcement, the Office of Energy Assistance, and the Division of Medical Programs. In addition the Department has an Office of Healthcare Purchasing, which conducts all non-Medicaid procurement for healthcare services provided to state employees or provided by state agencies.

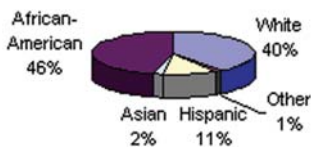
The primary client-facing functions of the Department are in this division. DCSE maintains regional offices across the state where staff assist clients to locate non-custodial parents, establish paternity and create child support orders. DCSE is the only division of HFS that serves clients in person. The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) serves more than 600,000 Illinois families.

Child Support Enforcement Clients



The Office of Energy Assistance serves over 350,000 households through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP).

LIHEAP Households



The Division of Medical Programs provides services to over 1.9 million people in All Kids, FamilyCare, Moms & Babies, AABD Medical (for persons who are aged, blind or who have a disability), Illinois Cares Rx and other healthcare programs. In FY06, approximately 39% of enrollees in their medical programs were Caucasian, 34% African American, 11% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 7% were Other or Unknown.

Best Practices

It is not enough to create programs, it is also critical to make these programs accessible, and HFS recognizes this. Therefore, they have devoted significant resources to streamlining the application process in order to make it easier for all eligible populations to enroll in HFS programs. They have also focused efforts on outreach and education so all Illinois residents are aware of HFS programs and have the opportunity to apply. In addition, they have instituted a number of best practices to increase access to services.

Partnerships with Community Organizations

The three major program areas of HFS have three distinct application processes, and HFS has partnered with community organizations to promote and take applications for each of their programs. The agency maintains a database of community partners, which they utilize to mutual advantage in disseminating information about new and existing programs, and community enrollment events. Minority, rural, and immigrant communities generally trust these organizations more than government, and these organizations have the cultural understanding and language skills needed to provide services.

Utilizing these partnerships, HFS has created the All Kids Application Agent (AKAA) network to assist families in their local communities and accessible settings to apply for All Kids. HFS partners with AKAA's from all areas of the state, including ethnic and immigrant communities.

Outreach

HFS outreach efforts have become more proactive over the last few years. They have created an Office of Outreach, which is responsible for educating the public about HFS programs. This Office ensures that state offices and community partners have adequate program brochures, informational booklets, fact sheets, posters, and other outreach materials to disseminate to the public. This outreach material has been translated into different languages for those with limited English proficiency. All HFS brochures, booklets, and posters are available in both English and Spanish, and the All Kids fact sheet has been translated into eighteen different languages.

The Office of Outreach also provides staffing for information tables at community events, makes presentations to existing and potential partners, and organizes state-sponsored enrollment events. The Office also has Spanish-speaking staff available for events in Hispanic communities. As a result of HFS outreach efforts, Illinois been recognized by the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured as being the first in the nation in enrolling families into medical programs for two consecutive years.

New Initiatives

HFS leadership conducted an internal assessment of HFS bilingual services and how the Department responds to the needs of clients with limited English proficiency. A result of this process has been the identification of new initiatives the Department intends to implement within the next few years.

Seek representation of immigrant-refugee organizations on HFS advisory councils.

HFS has advisory committees for the Child Support, Energy Assistance and Medical programs. These advisory committees consider a variety of issues related to the administration of these programs, and it is important to have input from groups that understand the needs of our covered population. As the terms for these advisory councils expire, and as new task forces and workgroups are developed, they will look for qualified individuals from the immigrant and refugee communities to serve on these bodies.

- **Continue efforts to recruit and hire bilingual staff.**

The Department actively seeks qualified bilingual candidates for positions within the agency, particularly for hotline, outreach and staff at critical points of contact. While there are factors that pose barriers to filling bilingual positions, HFS will continue to pursue this objective of increasing bilingual capabilities of its staff through both training and hiring.

- **Participate on the National Task Force on Outreach to Linguistic and Culturally Diverse Communities.**

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement is initiating a National Task Force on Outreach to Linguistic and Culturally Diverse Communities. The primary objective of this initiative is for program and judicial staff to determine and address the current and future needs of child support in these communities. HFS will have representation on the Task Force and plan to implement its recommendations as appropriate for Illinois.

HFS is dedicated to providing meaningful access to quality healthcare services for all eligible Illinoisans. They have built community partnerships, expanded program services, and enhanced outreach efforts, but there is more to be done. Access is more than eligibility, it also means assisting customers to navigate the application process so they can know and take advantage of the services they are eligible to receive, and that will assist them in integrating into their communities.

Department of Public Health

Created to regulate medical practitioners and to promote sanitation, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is charged with protecting the state's 12.4 million residents through prevention and control of disease and injury. Public health spans an array of services: vaccinations to protect children against disease; testing to assure the safety of food, water, and drugs; licensing to ensure quality health care in hospitals and nursing homes; investigations to control the outbreak of infectious diseases; collection and evaluation of health statistics to develop prevention and regulatory programs; screening newborns for genetic diseases; programs to meet the special needs of women. Combined, these vital programs and services make up Illinois' public health system, a system that bears major responsibility for the quality of life in the state.

With offices throughout Illinois, DPH has four different program divisions, each performing a specific service to the people of Illinois.

Office of Health Care Regulation. Depending on the health care provider, the Office of Health Care Regulation may license, inspect or certify those that must comply with state and federal regulations. The Office also operates a 24-hour a day hotline that people can call to register complaints against health care facilities.

Office of Health Promotion. This office is dedicated to promoting healthier and safer lifestyles through education, information, and services. Beginning almost from the moment of birth, and continuing through the lifespan, these programs play important roles in assessing the health of Illinois residents, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and providing information, resources, and referrals to those seeking to improve their health or to battle a chronic disease.

Office of Women's Health. Improving the health of women and girls throughout the lifespan is the mission of the Office of Women's Health. The programs funded by this office include multi-week workshops and/or health promotion activities that address breast and cervical cancer, heart disease, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, eating disorders, menopause and other health related issues.

Office of Health Protection. This office administers programs to prevent and control infectious and communicable diseases, to reduce and eliminate exposure to environmental hazards and to ensure a safe, wholesome and nutritious food supply.

Best Practices

To ensure that they are meeting the needs of the growing immigrant community, the Department of Public Health has engaged in the following best practice to enhance their services to the immigrant and refugee communities.

- **The Department of Public Health Center for Minority Health Services.**

The Center was created by legislative action as a vehicle for implementing change in addressing the health care needs of Illinois' communities of color. The Center works collaboratively with appropriate governmental agencies, faith-based, community-based, and educational organizations to heighten awareness of ethnic and minority health issues, and to develop, implement, promote, maintain, and evaluate culturally, linguistically, and developmentally competent programs throughout the state.

The Center has impacted Illinois' communities through the following programs:

- **The Refugee and Immigrant Health Screening Program.** In collaboration with seven local health departments, two health care centers, and community partners, the Refugee and Immigrant Health Screening Program coordinates the provision of health screenings to Illinois refugees and immigrants, and provides interpreters and language appropriate printed materials to refugees that have resettled throughout Illinois.
- **Stand Against Cancer Program.** Utilizing a network of federally qualified health centers, clinics, hospitals, community based and faith based organizations, the Stand Against Cancer Program provides breast and cervical cancer screenings and related activities to include outreach, education, and prevention services to ethnic/minority and low income women.
- **Bilingual Nurse Consortium.** The Consortium explores ways of meeting the critical need for bilingual nurses who are desperately sought after to facilitate communication with the growing number of limited English speaking patients. As a substantial number of foreign nurses living in Illinois were unsuccessful in obtaining licensure, a pilot program was established to assist them in meeting licensure requirements. The Consortium discovered many barriers to licensure and has been the driving force behind legislative and regulatory changes to remove these barriers.

New Initiatives

- **Administrative Directive on Provision of Interpretive Services for Limited English Proficient Persons**

An agency-wide administrative directive on addressing the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals is in the initial stages of implementation and is scheduled to take effect by May 2007. This directive will prohibit national origin discrimination as it affects limited English Proficient individuals (LEP), will apply to all DPH central and field offices, and will provide LEP persons with meaningful access to DPH programs, personnel, and community agencies with whom the Department has contracts to provide services.

The directive will include an LEP task force comprised of division liaisons that will provide input on a regular basis regarding Department staffing, and interpreter and/or bilingual needs to meet LEP compliance.

- **Broadening the Scope of Health Profession Scholarships**

To assist in increasing the number of minority health practitioners in Illinois, appropriate department staff will collaborate with community based, faith based, and educational organizations to increase both minority participation and matriculation in the health professions scholarship program. All of the scholarship programs require scholarship recipients to practice in an underserved area upon completion of their training.

In addition, appropriate department staff will investigate the possibility of legislative action to amend the current statute to include scholarships for foreign educated health professionals who are currently U.S. citizens but who are unable to practice their chosen profession due to additional requirements.

- **Immigrant Friendly Website (with links in various languages)**

The Department is in the initial phase of exploring the cost of enhancing the Department's website to make it more immigrant friendly allowing for access to key information in various languages. It is anticipated, subject to funding, that website enhancement would be completed by July 2007.

Department of Employment Security

Historically, the mission of the Department of Employment Security (DES) has been to support economic stability in the state by administering the Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, and Labor Market Information programs in Illinois. The agency makes their services accessible to all of its customers through the use of applicable technology and by working with other service providers within a statewide network of employment and training centers.

Unemployment Insurance. This employer-funded program is designed to partially protect eligible workers against loss of income during periods of unemployment and to contribute to the overall economic stability in Illinois.

Employment Services. This program is the Department's Labor Exchange system. The Labor Exchange program serves both employers and job seekers by filling the employers' job vacancies with qualified workers and decreasing the length of unemployment for job seekers. The Employment Service Program assists clients with accessing training, employability development services, and other needed supportive services to realize their employment goals.

Labor Market Information. As the state's primary provider of Labor Market Information, DES collects, analyzes, and publishes data for use by employers, job seekers, government agencies, educators, and economic developers. Economists, stationed throughout the state, conduct extensive analysis on the state's economy and labor force.

Best Practices

• Limited English Proficiency Policy

DES is one of a handful of state agencies that has a written policy on serving limited English Proficient individuals, which provides the foundation for the Department's language services to immigrants and refugees. To comply with this policy, these populations are served by bilingual staff, and when an onsite interpreter is unavailable, by the language line. In addition, the policy states that notices announcing the availability of free interpretation be provided. These and other notices are conspicuously posted at the entrances of local offices.

The implementation of this policy has improved service quality, as evidenced by positive feedback from residents receiving services and a decrease in complaints.

• Communication and Outreach

Providing translations of documents and signs to immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency helps them to better understand the scope of the Department of Employment Security programs, requirements, and opportunities, as well as to understand their rights as workers in the state. Including such information on the Department's website makes it even more accessible, particularly to those in rural and more remote regions of the state. The Department's outreach to community-based and faith-based organizations allows them to expand their reach dramatically by putting information into the hands of people who also have contact with immigrant and refugee communities.

- **Translated documents**—As a first step in communicating with the relevant communities and clients, the Department of Employment Services has translated key publications and documents into Spanish.
- **Teleserve**—Teleserve allows a claimant to certify or reopen his or her unemployment insurance claim by phone (in English or Spanish) and informs the claimant immediately when certification is accepted.
- **Website**—DES' website contains links to information in Spanish, such as worker benefits rights, appeals rights, labor market information, labor exchange information, and unemployment insurance glossary.
- **Community outreach**—IDES has reached out to community- and faith-based organizations that serve LEP customers and to refugee centers in Illinois. IDES is training community workers in relevant IDES services so they can pass this information on to those who may need it.
- **Signage and Alerts** —IDES also uses signage in its offices to assist LEP customers. One of those signs, as noted above, advertises the availability of interpretation services in IDES offices. All labor-related legal notifications (e.g., OSHA requirements, Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act) are posted in both English and Spanish. Signs are also found in resource rooms indicating which literature is available in Spanish.

The increased language access communication and outreach services put into practice by the Department of Employment

Security enables them to provide the same high quality service and support to immigrants and refugees with limited English skills as are provided to English speakers.

New Initiatives

Expand Website

The expansion of the DES website will:

- Include online bilingual Unemployment Insurance applications. Currently, IDES offers only bilingual paper applications;
- Provide more labor market information and employment services information online in Spanish; and
- Explore the possibility of translating some additional online documents into Polish and other languages as required.

Expand Outreach

This initiative will include expanding current outreach programs and services to community- and faith-based organizations and refugee organizations into areas of the state outside Chicago, creating new partnerships with community- and faith-based organizations, refugee organizations, and to migrant and seasonal farm workers.

Illinois State Board of Education

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provides leadership, advocacy, and support for the work of school districts, policymakers, and residents in making Illinois education second to none. The Board sets educational policies and guidelines for public and private schools, preschool through grade 12, as well as vocational education. It analyzes the aims, needs, and requirements of education and recommends legislation to the General Assembly and Governor for the benefit of the more than 2 million school children in Illinois.²² Of the more than 2 million school children in the state, approximately 50,000 were identified as eligible for immigrant education services.

Naturally, the immigrant and refugee population trends sweeping the state are reflected in the school system. Thirty-nine Illinois school districts serve 156,350 English Language Learners, and approximately 43% of those students are served by Chicago School District 299. An additional 22% of English Language Learners are served by other school districts in Cook County, and another 31% by districts in DuPage, Kane, Lake, Will, Winnebago, and McHenry Counties. School districts in northern and northwestern Illinois are home to a full 96% of the bilingual students served statewide. The remaining 4% are served by school districts in the central or southern part of the state.

Best Practices

The following are practices ISBE is engaged in to improve the provision of education services to immigrant and refugee children with limited English language skills.

Preschool for All

Early Childhood centers throughout the state receive grants to that they can provide preschool free of charge to children who would not otherwise be able to attend. In the summer of 2005, ISBE held a series of community meetings in Cicero, Berwyn, Aurora, and Elgin to encourage Latino organizations to apply for preschool grants. As a result, many organizations in these communities received grants for the first time in 2006; resultantly, a greater portion of the Latino population is able to attend preschool free of charge.

Division of English Language Learning

In light of the New Americans Executive Order, it is important to take into account the dynamics of local school districts, and for ISBE to recognize the diversity of Illinois' student population. Programs offered which acknowledge this diversity include but are not limited to those offered through the Division of English Language Learning. These programs are designed to meet the needs of English language learners and bring students with limited English proficiency into mainstream American life. The goal of English Language Learning programs are to accelerate the academic achievement levels of students so that they transition into regular classrooms as rapidly as possible. The Division of English Language Learners supports programs for bilingual, immigrant, migrant, and refugee students acquiring knowledge and skills in the English language.

- **Education of Migratory Children.** The Illinois Migrant Education Program works through local and regional

²² <http://www.isbe.net/board/>

recruiters to identify and reach out to migrant families, often through contacts with employers who hire migrant workers. The Illinois Migrant Council assists ISBE by identifying employers of migrant workers scattered throughout the state, and in doing so, migrant children are identified, the need for education services is substantiated, and school districts can apply for funds to provide much needed language services.

· **Refugee and Immigrant Conference.** ISBE's Division of English Language Learning is convening the Refugee and Immigrant Conference, "Partners in Success for New Americans: Family—School—Health." Presenters from across the country will hold workshops relevant to the work of those who assist refugee and immigrant children and their families on issues of school, health, and the challenges of cultural adjustment. This division will also continue to facilitate and disseminate information to teachers about best practices for refugee children.

· **Regional Offices of Education English Language Learner Professional Development Mini Grant**

Grants made through this program are designed to provide professional development to rural or small districts that are experiencing the enrollment of students with limited English proficiency for the first time or are experiencing a major influx of these kinds of students. The professional development will assist these regional offices of Education in informing districts of state and federal laws; educating teachers on best practices in bilingual education; providing districts with ESL teachers, bilingual teachers and teacher aides; and training districts on bilingual program models, curriculum, and methods of instruction.

· **Spanish Teacher Exchange Program**

Illinois/Spanish Visiting Teacher's Program. In this program, highly qualified teachers from Spain come to Illinois to teach Bilingual Education classes. Because of the high quality of their preparation these teachers also add a strong bicultural dimension to their service in Illinois.²³

Summer Institutes. The Spanish Ministry of Education and several Spanish universities partially sponsor scholarships to U.S. teachers of Spanish to attend language and culture or children's literature courses for three weeks in Spain. The courses take place in July and provide three university credits to the attendants.²⁴

New Initiatives

· **English Language Proficiency Standards**

English Language Proficiency standards were designed to provide consistency in how students who are new to the United States, as well as the English language, are taught. These standards allow teachers statewide to refer to common material that needs to be covered at each grade level, and provide direction on teaching language skills relevant to specific subject matter.

· **Bilingual Teacher Recruitment Exchange Program with Puerto Rico**

Based on the Teacher Exchange program with Spain, work is currently being done to research and analyze the scope of activities needed to recruit in Puerto Rico. The language expertise of these teachers will, like the existing Teacher Exchange program, broaden the scope of the Bilingual Education classes they come to teach.

Illinois Board of Higher Education

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) was established to coordinate the state's diverse system of higher education including public universities, community colleges, and independent colleges and universities. IBHE addresses the interest of Illinois citizens, serves the Governor and General Assembly, and advances the interests of colleges and universities. The Board advises the Governor about higher education matters and may recommend to the General Assembly the enactment of such legislation needed to insure the quality of higher education.

Best Practices

The following are examples of practices that are occurring on Illinois campuses to ensure that immigrants and refugees are welcomed and a part of the institutional community.

· **Campus-Based Multi-Cultural Centers**

Several Illinois colleges and universities have established multicultural centers for international students and staff as a means of providing outreach and support services to immigrant, refugee, and international students. The services provided are built on the needs of those being served. These centers have become extremely popular and are considered an effective practice for welcoming new immigrants.

²³ http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/htmls/spanish_exchange.htm

²⁴ *ibid.*

Office of Academic Development – English Language Program, Northeastern Illinois University

Northeastern Illinois University serves over 12,000 students from the Chicago metropolitan area, with students from 111 different countries attending classes in the fall of 2004. Forty-six percent of the university's 2004 freshman class reported that English is not their first language. In response to this diversity in their student body, the University for many years has provided a number of courses and academic initiatives that improve the students' ability to communicate and enhance understanding and appreciation of others and their cultures.

The acquisition of advanced language proficiency provides access to opportunities for those whose primary language is not English. The primary goal of the Office of Academic Development's English Language Program is to serve the richly diverse population of Northeastern by providing students with an opportunity to acquire the level of English language and written communication skills they need in order to succeed in higher education.

Heritage Conferences, Northeastern Illinois University

Each year, the University—via the Office of Academic Development—produces and coordinates a series of Heritage Conferences that celebrate our collective cultural experience and heritage. These annual conferences offer a range of programming to support faculty, foster a supportive and collaborative environment in which to explore innovative approaches and enhance the success and satisfaction of students in the pursuit of their educational goals.

Though Northeastern Illinois University has been highlighted here, similar programs are being practiced and implemented throughout the state's higher education institutions.

Community Outreach, Southern Illinois University

Through two Southern Illinois University at Carbondale student groups—the Hispanic Student Council and the Hispanic Law Student Association—there has been sustained contact for the past 15 years with the growing migrant and seasonal worker population of southern Illinois. Outreach to this immigrant community has included:

- Annual migrant housing cleanup and painting

- Ongoing English language instruction to migrant and seasonal worker children
- Ongoing after school tutoring programs
- Elementary and high school visits by college students
- Southern Illinois University at Carbondale sponsored campus visits from the migrant/seasonal worker feeder school for that area

The result of this outreach has been a steady increase of migrant/seasonal worker student applications and enrollment at area community colleges and at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

New Initiatives

The Board of Higher Education has new initiatives that ease the integration process for immigrant and refugee students. These initiatives are structured for recent immigrants and U.S. citizens to participate fully in all aspects of American life.

Admissions and Institutionalized Practices, Southern Illinois University

Bilingual Recruiters and Marketing Materials. Bilingual staff and materials will be used to target all family members, in particular parents and guardians, in an effort to better communicate the value of higher education for personal, intellectual, economic and political empowerment. Traditionally concentrated in the Chicago metropolitan area, these efforts have been expanded to include central and southern Illinois, in response to the changing demographics in those areas.

Latinas and Higher Education. The first of its kind in Illinois higher education, this new initiative specifically targets immigrant Latino women and benefits all Illinois higher education public institutions. Its purpose is to focus on Hispanic high school and community college women—with a central emphasis on the family—in communicating about higher education efficacy. It also focuses on types of institutions, costs and financial aid, and the ways in which attending college, in particular a residential university, can be done in such a way that respects the cultural role and value of the family of the various Latino cultures.

The Board of Higher Education, in its role as the coordinating board for Illinois colleges and universities, is committed to addressing the needs of immigrant and refugee students and their families. They understand the need to adapt educational

services to a new kind of student, assisting these students on their way to becoming active participants in the life of the state of Illinois.

Illinois Community College Board

The mission of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is to maximize the ability of the community colleges to serve their communities, promote collaboration within the community college system, and accommodate those state initiatives that are appropriate for community colleges. The Community College Board—in its role as a coordinating agency for community colleges—is an integral partner with local boards of trustees in providing a framework for successful learning experiences for all Illinois residents. The Board further affirms its commitment to providing leadership and direction to the community college system in ways that maximize local autonomy but which assure each local institution is allowed an equal chance of success.

Each of the 49 public community colleges is a comprehensive college in that it provides extensive instructional and student support services to serve the needs of individuals, as well as public services to address the needs of the community. The community colleges serve over one million Illinois residents, and provide approximately 3,500 associate degree and certificate programs

In July 2001, the Community College Board expanded its mission to include the administration of Adult Education and Family Literacy; this includes English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction. In Illinois, ESL learners represent 58% of Adult Education instruction provided in adult education classrooms statewide.

ICCB maintains a commitment to building a strong system of diverse programs that is responsive to the changing needs of the immigrants and refugees. As such, they have engaged in a number of best practices to ensure that language and education services to these groups.

Best Practices

- English-as-a-Second-Language Task Force

In 2006, an ESL Task Force was established to inform ICCB's Adult Education system of the instructional needs within the ESL classroom. The charge of the ESL Task Force was to identify and recommend strategies to ICCB on issues relative

to providing the best instruction possible to ESL students. The group's mission has been to develop ESL Content Standards, research standardized testing options, and explore how ESL students are transitioned to adult basic education, employment, and postsecondary education.

- Workforce Investment Act Grants – ESL Specific

Over the past three years, the Community College Board, in cooperation with a number of governmental and non-governmental partners, has worked to develop specific programs designed to enable ESL students to transition to specific careers. Through this grant, twelve projects were funded to address the specific ESL needs within designated areas of the state.

In addition to the best practices at ICCB, they are implementing new initiatives geared toward improving the provision of education services to immigrants and refugees.

New Initiatives

- English Literacy/Civics Competencies Development and Training

In an effort to ensure that English Literacy/Civics content is being taught, the Community College Board's ESL Task Force developed the English Literacy/Civics Competencies to be used as a measure of accountability. The English Literacy/Civics competencies cover the areas of the democratic process, community resources, U.S. school system, health services, and housing. The development of the English Literacy/Civics competencies will ensure better accountability.

- Alignment of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Content Standards and Curricula

For the past two years, the Community College Board has worked with the ESL Task Force in the development of Content Standards for ESL. These standards have been developed and have been pilot tested. Over the next year, adult education program instructors will be trained in the use of content standards and the alignment of curricula and content standards. This alignment will:

- Improve curricula to meet the needs of the students
- Ensure content is consistent statewide
- Ensure quality instruction

ICCB will continue its commitment to developing programs and services that focus on the student and their success. The

Board will also continue to form systems that are responsive to the emerging needs of ESL students statewide. As a part of their commitment to providing comprehensive services to immigrants and refugees, the Board will continue to provide innovative ways to assist individuals and families to have high quality work and life opportunities in Illinois.

Conclusion

As the country continues to grapple with immigration policy and with deciding how best to engage the foreign-born while not alienating the native-born, Illinois is faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of all state residents. Assisting immigrants in integrating into new communities does just that; by speeding the process of integrations, immigrants are able to make meaningful contributions to their communities. We in Illinois recognize the importance of ensuring meaningful services and access to services for immigrant and refugee populations, and are committed to providing those services.

The implementation of recommendations has already begun, as the state has identified several high-level recommendations for fiscal year 2008. These include:

- The establishment of an immigrant and refugee Welcoming Center
- Charging each state agency with developing their own “New Americans Plans” indicating how they will incorporate the recommendations
- The Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy creating a basic cultural competence curriculum, and a process for evaluating existing state agency plans

In the more immediate future, each state agency will be charged with developing a comprehensive limited English proficiency plan. By the end of fiscal year 2007, each state agency will have:

- Instituted a bilingual pay policy

- Implemented a bilingual competency test
- Developed protocols for use of interpreters
- Plans for communicating with limited English proficient individuals

The Department of Human Services has heretofore been engaged in increasing access to services for the limited English proficient population, and has developed a number of policies, procedures, and service provision steps. Other state agencies will have these tools to utilize as a foundation for the development of their own plans in response to this comprehensive list of global recommendations.

This report exemplifies the process of interagency collaboration, and the beginning of a new way to serve Illinois residents. By implementing the changes identified in the universal recommendations, Illinois will lead the nation in structuring the way immigrant and refugee residents are served.

This report presents these recommendations to the Governor, and to the state, and reflects our commitment to integrating immigrant and refugee groups into our communities.

APPENDIX A

Interagency Task Force

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APPENDIX B

New Americans Executive Order

New Americans Executive Order

Directed by Governor Rod R. Blagojevich, the state worked closely with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to develop and create the Executive Order, crafting it in such a way as to build on the strengths of immigrants. The foundation community was solicited early on in the process, impressed with the joint venture between community and state entities. This synergism involving civic, government, and immigrant leaders conscientiously addresses the issue of immigrant integration. Governor Rod Blagojevich has committed to moving Illinois towards a coherent, strategic, and proactive approach to address Illinois' rapidly growing immigrant population. The New Americans Executive Order does just that.

The New Americans Executive Order has four primary objectives:

- To convene a council of Illinois and national experts to recommend strategic directions for Illinois Immigrant Policy.
- To create an office that will analyze federal immigration law and policy changes and advise the governor on how the State of Illinois should respond.
- To create an interagency task force of state agencies to examine, agency by agency, how state government can systematically address the changing demographics of Illinois.
- To make a substantive contribution to the national discourse on immigrant integration policy.

Interagency Task Force

- This task force has been charged with developing statewide recommendations, and implementing changes.
- State agencies are also finding ownership in the process of developing standards for addressing language access issues, as well as issues of cultural competence.

Policy Council

- Community groups and community leaders are working together with Illinois business, faith, labor, philanthropic

and government leaders to form a public-private partnership.

- This partnership consults with immigrant leaders, Illinois governmental leaders, and an advisory committee of national policy experts to recommend strategic directions for Illinois immigrant policy.
- Further, this council develops recommendations on the most effective and strategic measures that the state of Illinois can take to integrate immigrants fully into the economic and civic life of the state, for the benefit of the state, the immigrants themselves, and their new communities.

Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy

- This office is charged with guiding the Interagency Task Force through the process of developing a statewide, systematic approach to serving the immigrant population in Illinois.
- This office will also monitor federal immigration policy, and advise the Governor on policy developments.
- Where necessary, this office will act as a liaison and advocate for Illinois families negatively affected by federal immigration policy.

APPENDIX C

Maps

Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

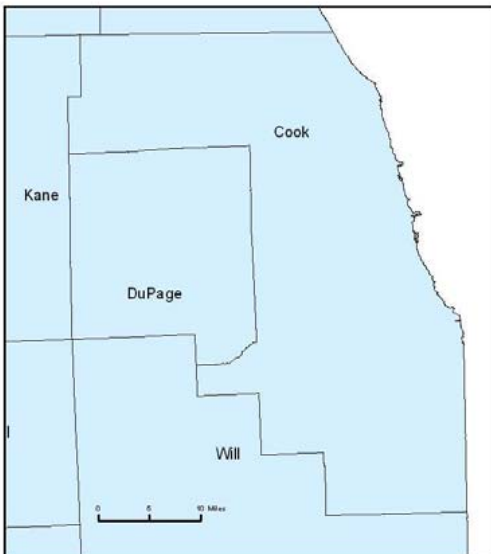
Illinois Dept. on Aging

Legend

■ Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic
or contractual interpretation.

There are no Dept. on Aging
Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



25 0 25 50 75 100
Miles

Map created September, 2006 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

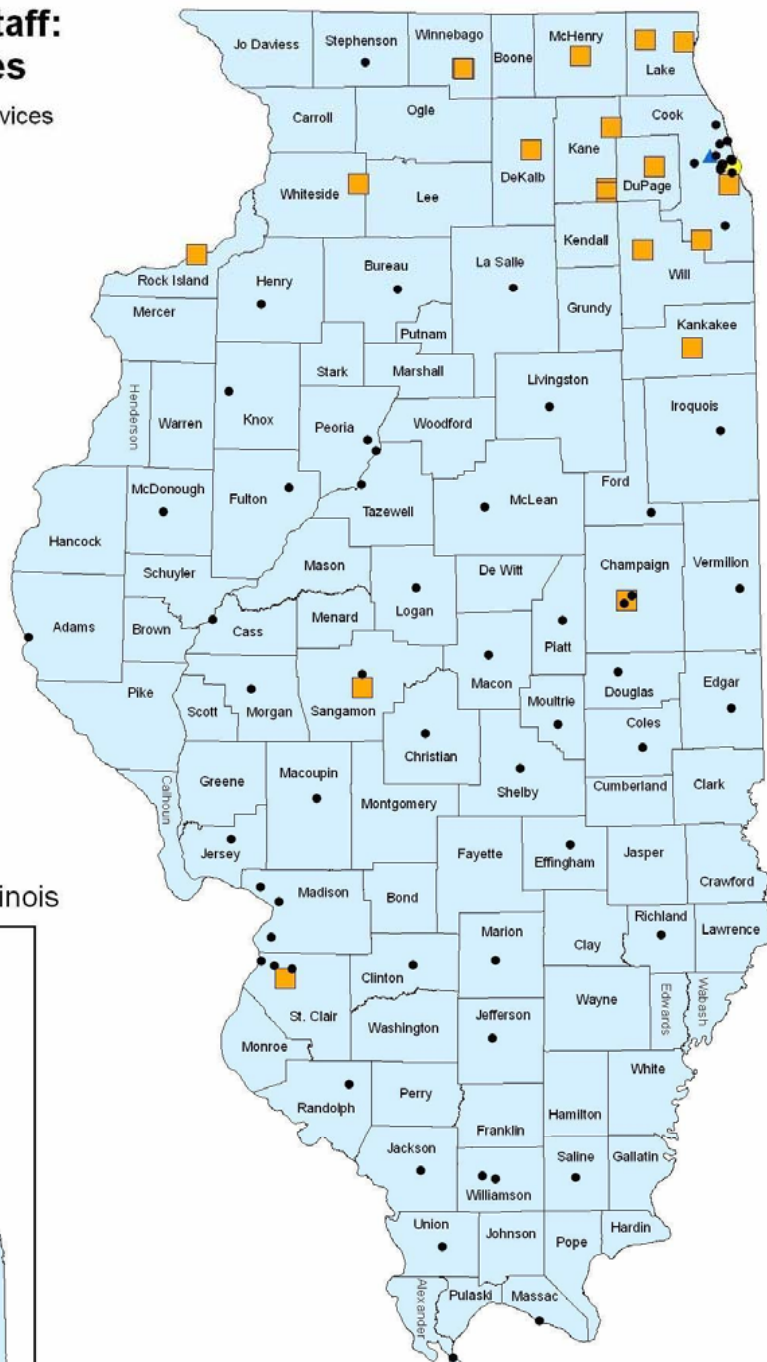
Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

Illinois Dept. of Children & Family Services

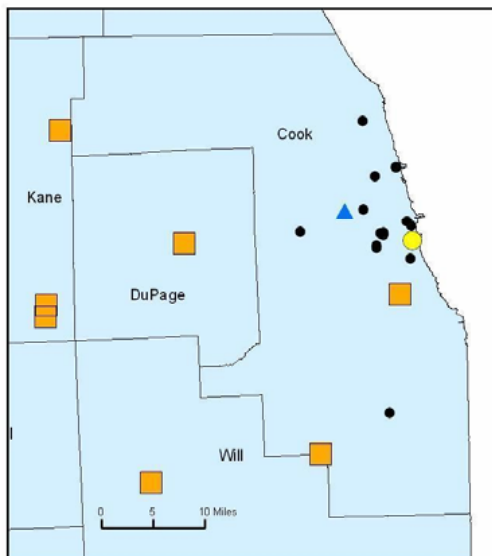
Legend

- English
- Manual
- ▲ Polish
- Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic or contractual interpretation.



DCFS Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



25 0 25 50 75 100 Miles

Map created September, 2006 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

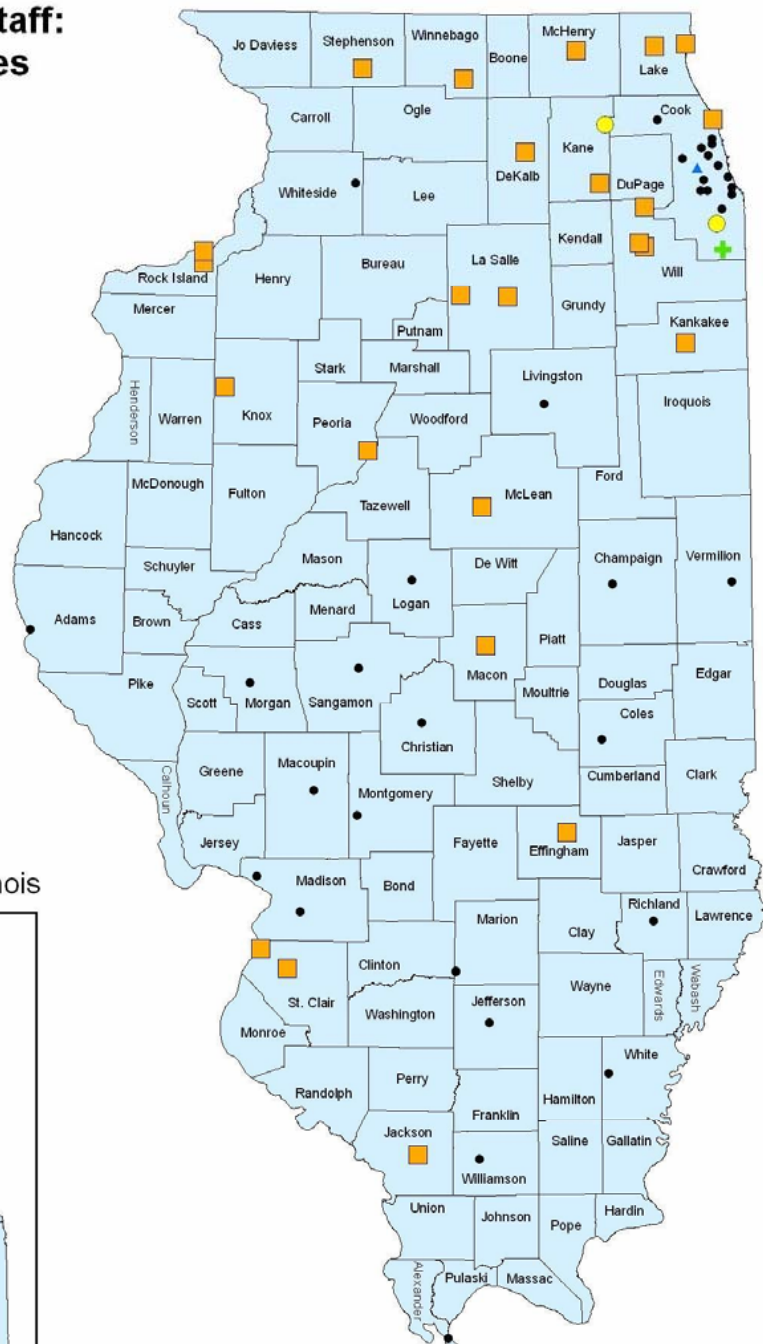
Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

Illinois Dept. of Employment Security

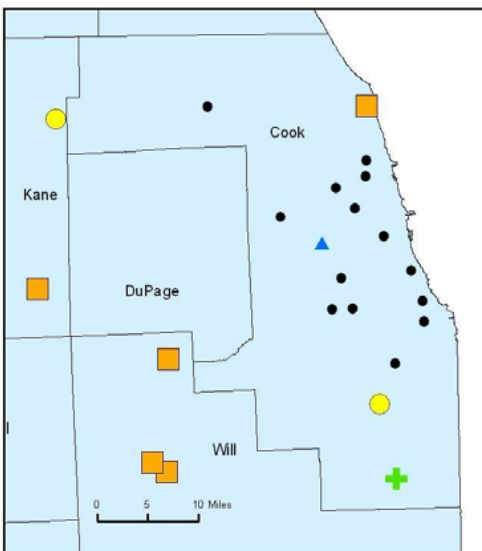
Legend

- English
- + Greek
- Manual
- ▲ Polish
- Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic or contractual interpretation.



DES Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



25 0 25 50 75 100 Miles

Map created September, 2006 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

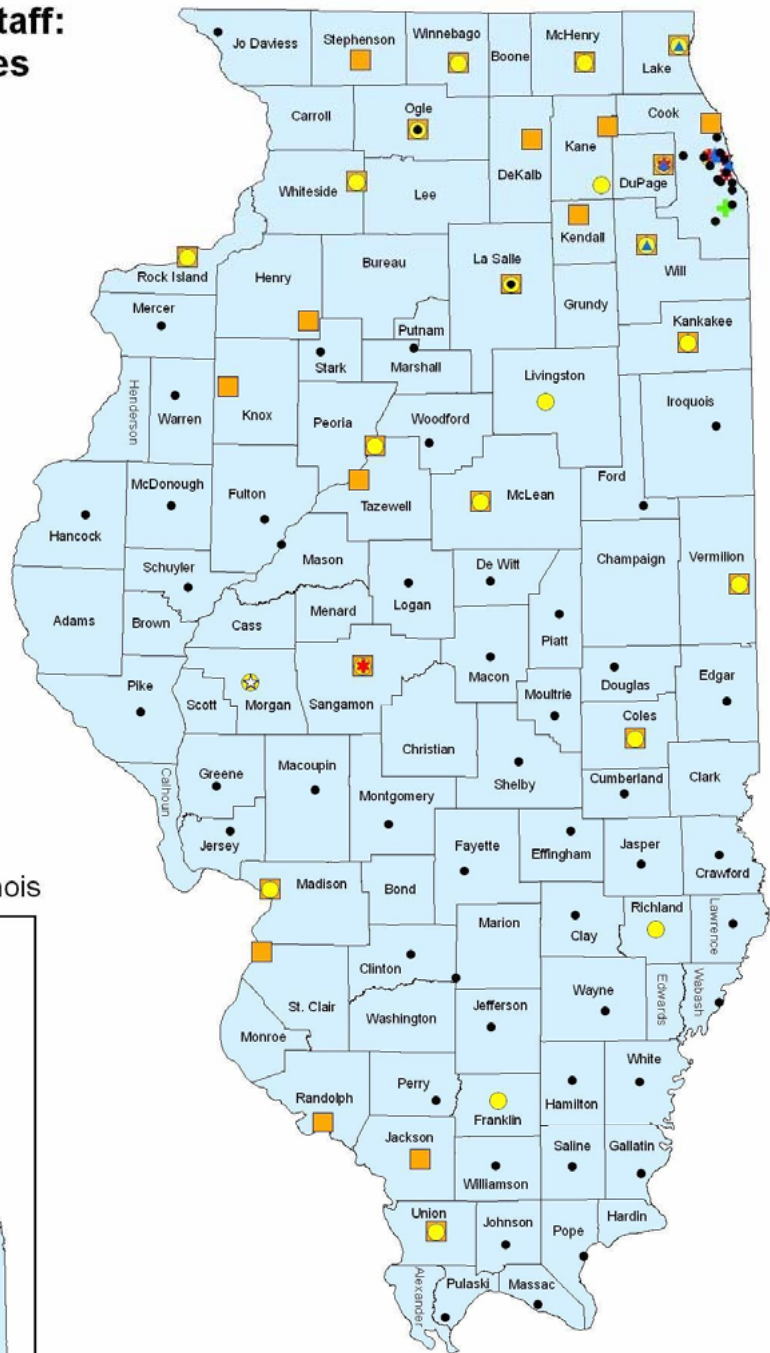
Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

Illinois Dept. of Human Services

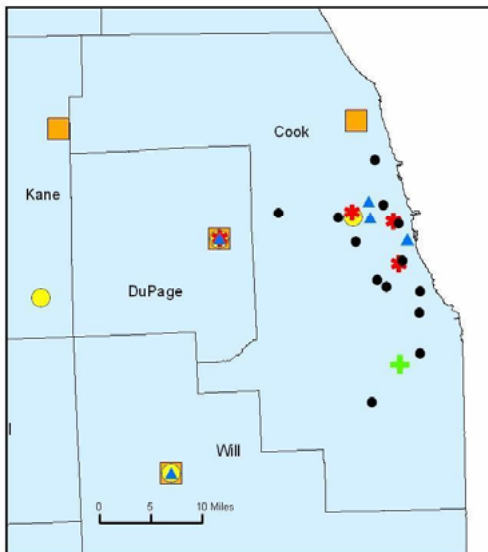
Legend

- + Arabic
- * Asian Languages
- ☆ Braille
- ▲ Eastern European Languages
- English
- Manual
- Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic or contractual interpretation.



DHS Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



25 0 25 50 75 100 Miles

Map created September, 2006 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

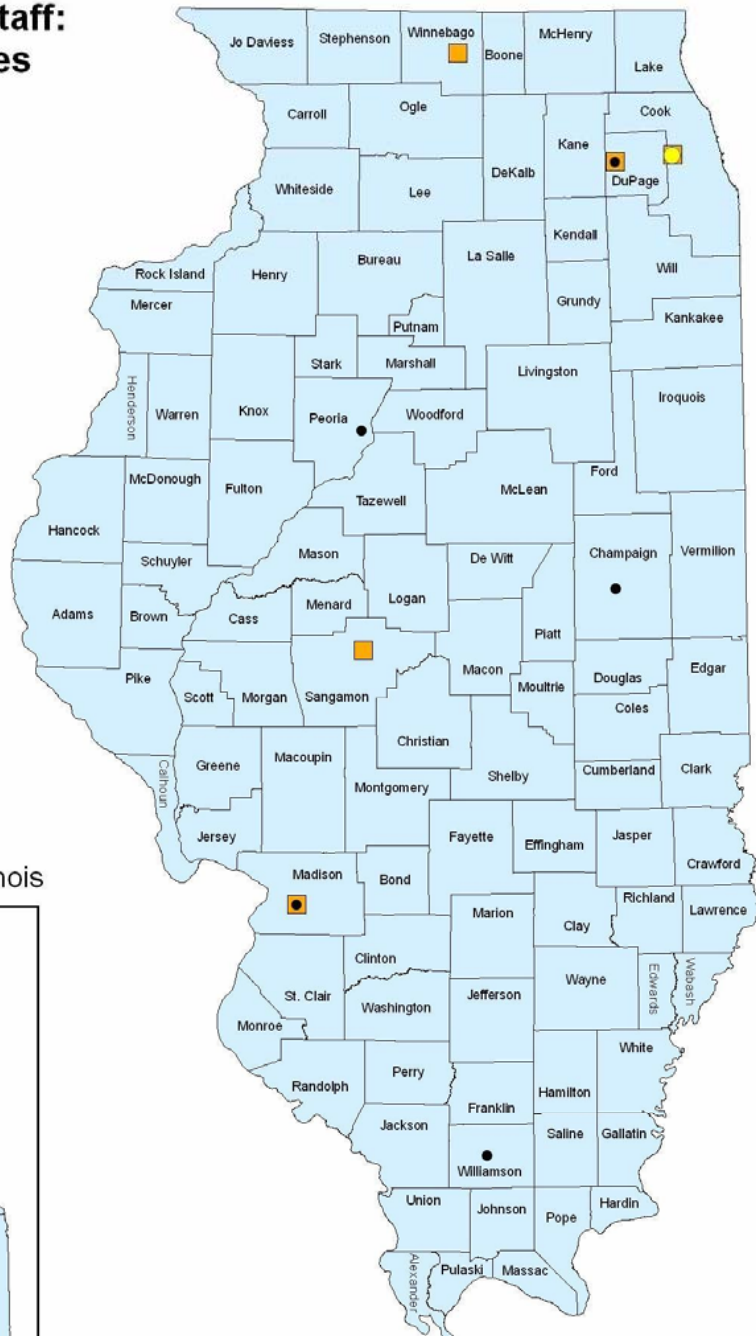
Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

Illinois Dept. of Public Health

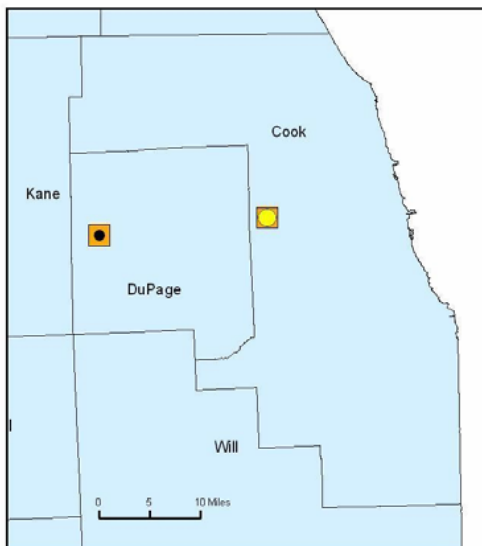
Legend

- English
- Manual
- Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic or contractual interpretation.



DPH Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



Map created September, 2006 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

Location of Bilingual Staff: Health & Social Services

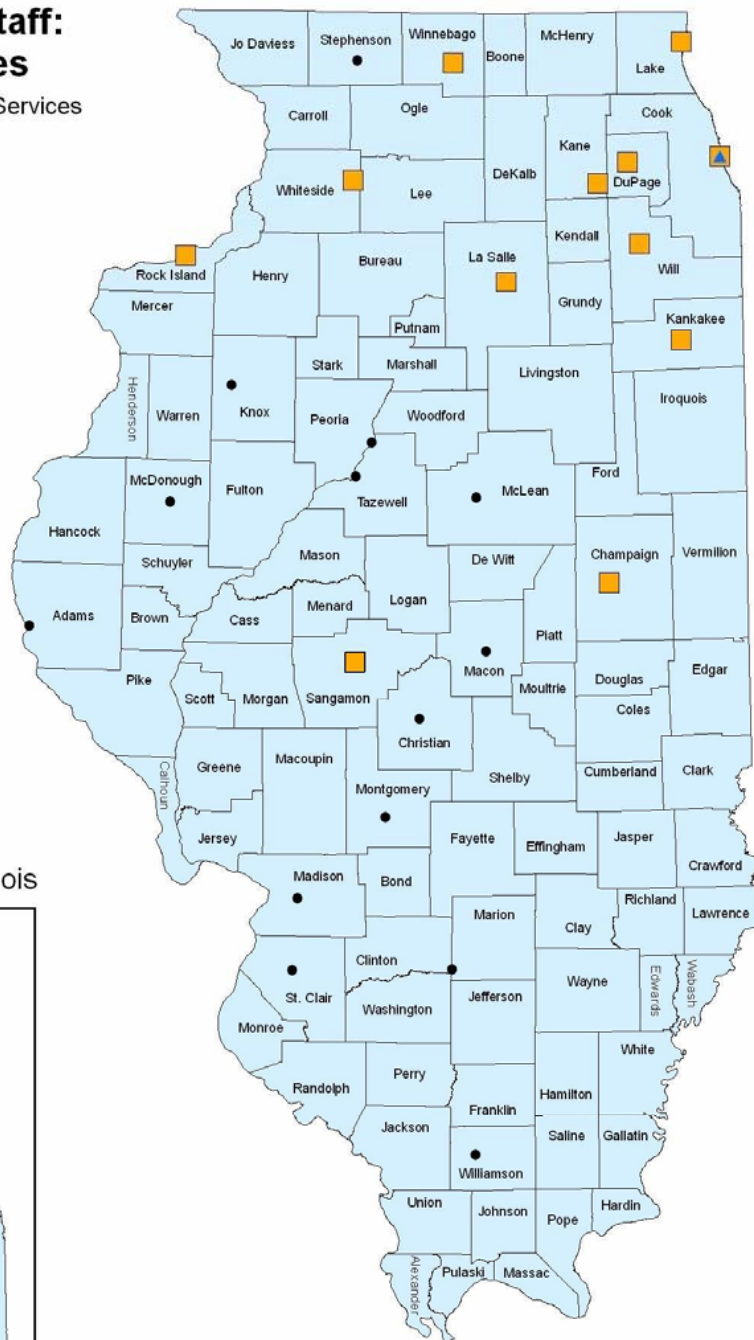
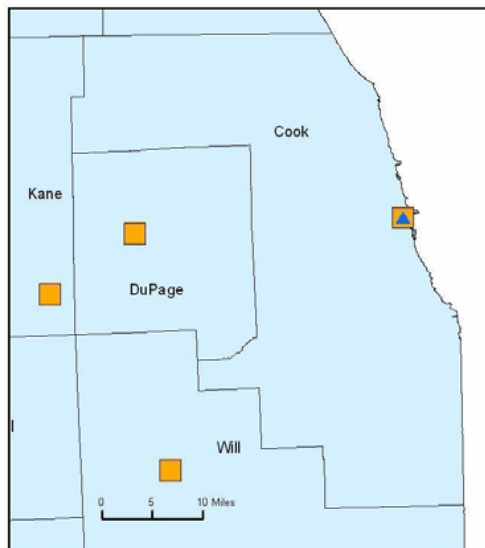
Illinois Dept. of Healthcare & Family Services

Legend

- English
- ▲ Polish
- Spanish

* Map does not include telephonic or contractual interpretation.

HFS Facilities in Northeastern Illinois



Map created September, 2005 by Mauricio Lora, IDPH for Governor Blagojevich's Office
Data Source: Governor Blagojevich's Office

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